

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION
FOR IRELAND.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE
ON
FOOD PRODUCTION
IN IRELAND.

**Minutes of Evidence, Minutes of
Deliberative Conferences, and Appendices.**

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE IS PRINTED SEPARATELY.

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



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To His Excellency IVOR CHURCHILL, BARON WIMBORNE, &c., &c.,
LORD LIEUTENANT-GENERAL AND GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I am directed by the Vice-President to submit to Your Excellency the Minutes of Evidence taken by the Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland, together with the Minutes of the Deliberative Conferences of the Committee, and the Appendices thereto.

I have the honour to remain,

Your Excellency's faithful Servant,

T. P. GILL,
Secretary.

Department of Agriculture and
Technical Instruction for Ireland,
Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin, 3rd January, 1916.

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Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

COPY OF MINUTE APPOINTING THE COMMITTEE.

I HEREBY nominate and appoint a Committee to consider and report what steps should be taken by legislation or otherwise for the sole purpose of maintaining and, if possible, increasing the present production of food in Ireland, on the assumption that the war may be prolonged beyond the harvest of 1916.

The Committee will be constituted as follows:—

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland (Chairman);

Mr. JOHN BAGWELL, General Manager, Great Northern Railway (Ireland);

Mr. HUGH T. BARRIE, D.L., M.P.;

Mr. C. F. BASTABLE, M.A., LL.B., Professor of Political Economy, Dublin University;

Mr. JOHN P. BOLAND, M.P.;

Mr. ROBERT N. BOYD, Carrigrohoney, Co. Antrim;

Mr. J. R. CAMPBELL, B.Sc., Assistant Secretary in respect of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland;

Mr. ROBERT DOWNES, J.P., Russellstown, Mullingar;

Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.;

Mr. THOMAS P. GILL, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland;

Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc., Deputy Assistant Secretary in respect of Agriculture and Chief Agricultural Inspector, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland;

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY, Lord Bishop of Ross;

Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P., ex-Chairman, Cork County Council;

Mr. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L., Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone;

Mr. GEORGE MURNAGHAN, J.P., Omagh, Co. Tyrone;

Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR, Mylerstown, Naas; Kildare County Council;

Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P., Chairman, Dublin County Council;

The Right Hon. Sir HORACE C. PLUNKETT, D.C.L., K.C.V.O., F.R.S., etc., President, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

(Signed), T. W. RUSSELL,

Vice-President, Department of Agriculture
and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Dated this 28th day of June, 1915.

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY.

Mr. ERNEST A. M. MORRIS, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, has been appointed Secretary to the Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

30th day of June, 1915.

NAMES OF WITNESSES.

Mr. J. ADERS, Secretary, Irish Corn Trade Association.

Mr. R. A. ANDERSON, Secretary, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

Mr. T. J. CROWE, Menlough Co-operative Agricultural Society.

Mr. J. HUNT, Fourmile-House Co-operative Agricultural Society, Co. Roscommon.

Mr. P. McNULTY, Transit Inspector, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Mr. J. MILNE, J.P., Chairman, Irish Fertiliser Manufacturers' Association.

Mr. D. S. PRENTICE, M.R.C.V.S., Chief Inspector, Veterinary Branch, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Mr. JAMES ROBERTSON, Representing the Irish Seed Trade Association.

Mr. S. SMITH, Representative in respect of Marketing, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Mr. W. T. WATSON (Messrs. Paul and Vincent).

Mr. T. WIBBERLEY, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The Report of the Committee—together with Reservations and Memoranda and Minority Report with Annex—is published separately. Cd. 8046-1915.

In this volume the Minutes of the Oral Evidence are given in full. The Minutes of the Deliberative Conferences, on the other hand, have been somewhat condensed from motives of economy, but care has been taken to preserve their material accuracy.

A brief index is appended.

Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

FIRST SITTING FOR TAKING ORAL EVIDENCE—21st JULY, 1915.

The Committee met at the Royal College of Science, Dublin, at 11 o'clock, a.m.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT WERE:

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., CHAIRMAN.

Mr. JOHN BAGWELL.
Mr. HUGH T. BARRIS, D.L., M.P.
Mr. C. F. BASTABLE, M.A., LL.D.
Mr. ROBERT N. BOTT.
Mr. ROBERT DOWNES, J.P.
Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.
Mr. T. F. GILL.
Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc.

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.
Mr. WILLIAM McDONNAN, J.P.
Mr. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L.
Mr. GEORGE MORRISMAN, J.P.
Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR.
Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P.
The Right Hon. Sir H. PEARSON, B.C.L.,
R.C.V.O.

Mr. E. A. M. MORRIS, M.A., B.L., Secretary.

Mr. DAVID S. PRESTON, M.R.C.V.S., Chief Inspector, Veterinary Branch of the Department, examined.

1. THE CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Preston at ease of our Conference I brought before the Committee the difficulties that have arisen about the loading berths on the Great Southern and Western Railway. I mentioned the cases of Swinford and Thurles. I did not say that they were typical, but I said, speaking officially, that there were difficulties throughout the whole of that line, and perhaps on the Midland Great Western Railway. I promised to have a witness here because if it came to be a very serious question it might be necessary to ask the Railway Company to send witnesses. On consultation with you after the Committee Meeting you told me there was a case in Kilkenny quite recently and that the Railway Company had stated that there was no grievance, but that until the Seasonal would was easy—that it was very difficult at present to get money or words to that effect—that the Department had previously adjourned the consideration of the whole question until that time, is that so?—I suppose it is telling me secret here that there is an understanding with the Great Southern that until the financial crisis is ended the Department will not press the Railway with regard to large expenditures. In so far as the railway accommodation generally is concerned in the live stock traffic I think it right to say that while there are individual cases which have by no means reached perfection, yet no man who looks back upon what the Railway Companies have done with regard to the carriage of live stock can help seeing that they have brought about wonderful changes for the better. I have an experience myself of the railways for something like thirty years, and I think that any person, even the gentleman here concerned immediately in the live stock trade, will agree with me that there have been pretty large improvements brought about by the railways. There are, of course, cases like Kilkenny where all that is required and all that the Department has suggested has not been done, but the Railway Company has not refused to do these improvements or to bring them about.

2. Is that true of Swinford?—That is not true of Swinford. I will explain the Swinford case in a few moments. With regard to Kilkenny, the Railway

Company I know have not sufficient loading accommodation. Years ago they endeavoured to buy land which belongs, I think, to an Infirmary adjoining their station, and they failed to come to terms. Now that is the excuse of the Railway Company for not providing larger accommodation at Kilkenny, and as far as I know it is the real reason. At the same time they have promised when they can manage to obtain more land that they will improve the accommodation there. Now with regard to Swinford, it is a station on a railway which I think is known as one of Mr. Bulfinch's lines.

3. One of the Guaranteed Lines?—Yes. It formerly was worked by the Waterford and Limerick Railway, and then it was taken over by the Great Southern when they absorbed the Waterford and Limerick and the railways that they worked. Now the complaint with regard to Swinford is this, that it does not possess sufficient accommodation to load swine and that people coming from the fair in Swinford bring down their swine to the cattle bank. They cannot there find sufficient trucks brought alongside the cattle bank to load the swine into them; consequently they take the swine down on to the permanent way and load them into the railway trucks, and a complaint has been made by the Inspectors of this Department that thereby arose to the swine on that account.

4. And some danger to the public?—Yes, on the permanent way, but the answer of the Railway Company is this. They say the swine are brought and brought to the station in such a peculiar way that a man who might fill a truck with, say, 20 or 30 swine, brings, or someone on his behalf brings, down a couple of swine and put them into one truck, reserving it, so to speak. Then another buyer also brings down a couple of swine and places one in one truck and another in another truck, and that procedure goes on until all the trucks drawn up on the railway bank are occupied in this manner. This system paralyzes the railway people, because these wagons being only partly loaded up they cannot shift them out to bring in others for more swine to be loaded, and the people left the swine into what whatever empty truck they can find.

* See pp. 55, et seq.

Mr. FIELD.—It is the early door system!

Mr. PRESTON.—The Railway Companies are perhaps to blame to some extent, but there are others to blame as well. That so far as I know is the history of the Swinfold case.

5. The CHAIRMAN.—I don't want to prolong your evidence on account of the arrangements that has been come to by the Department and the Railway Company in the Kilkenny case, which was subsequent to Swinfold—that the Department will wait for reform in this matter until the financial position is easy. I have mentioned the Swinfold and Thurles cases to the Committee. You remember 400 cattle being left behind in Thurles?—Yes.

6. And we have also the Kilkenny case. In as much as the Department has agreed not to press this manifest grievance, which is a financial grievance, until the money market is easy I have no doubt to press it any further.

7. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Is it not an understood thing on behalf of the cattle trade that the railway should not allow any animals into a truck until there was a full load? We agreed to that in the Cattle Traders' Association years ago—that no sender should be allowed to put a beast into a truck until he had a full load and that it was the business of the railway people to prevent it?—That was in regard to cattle, but I am not sure whether it is so in regard to swine, but in any event the railway companies have promised that so far as they can they will prevent what is called free-stalling. At the same time the position is this, that a drover brings cattle from the Fair to the Railway Station and the sooner he gets rid of them and puts them into a truck, whether they fill the truck or not, the better he likes it and the sooner he gets back to bring down more cattle. It is sometimes difficult for the companies or the owners to prevent it.

8. The CHAIRMAN.—The early door system is a recognised system in Swinfold?—It is.

9. And no doubt about it the Railway Company can stop it?—I don't say that, could it they put more energy into the matter.

10. Mr. FIELD.—Are you aware that this system of free-stalling caused to such an extent in Ennis some years ago as to become a public scandal?—I believe so.

11. And that these drovers used to take possession of the waggon and threatened to take the lives of anybody who interfered with them?—I don't know about taking of lives, but I know they were difficult to deal with.

12. That is the same thing, and the Railway Company had to make regulations which I think almost put an end to that system?—Yes.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am not withdrawing anything I said, but I am simply stating that the Department had come to a decision to await a more favourable financial time for pressing improvements involving financial expenditure.

Mr. FIELD.—This is a question of discipline not finance. This is a question of Railway Companies enforcing regulations which they have power to do if they have the determination to do so. It is many years since we made representations on this subject to the Companies, and we thought it had ended.

13. The CHAIRMAN (to Witness).—Has the Department adequate power to deal with this matter?—So far as preventing the loading of animals from the permanent way into the trucks is concerned they have not adequate powers; but of course it is open to any person to proceed under the Protection of Animals Act if they could prove cruelty.

14. Have the Department power to demand adequate loading accommodation?—Possibly not under the Diseases Act, but they have under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act power to require reasonable facilities at stations for traffic.

15. Mr. FIELD.—Would you call that reasonable facilities in Swinfold?—I do not, but I do say it is an action with which the people engaged in the pig trade are as much concerned as the Railway Company.

16. I look upon the state of things in Kilkenny as most extraordinary. I have seen cattle lamed and battered in a most extraordinary manner, and are we to understand that the Department, which is charged to a certain extent with the humane treatment of cattle, have no power to get the Company to improve this state of affairs—I saw it myself?—The Department have made representations from time to time with regard to abuses which animals receive at Kilkenny

station. Kilkenny station has been considerably improved so far as accommodation for cattle is concerned. Before the railway amalgamation—I suppose about 10 or 15 years ago—Kilkenny station was worked by two companies, one company had one part concerned with the Waterford trade alone, and the company was concerned in traffic to the Great Southern side. The accommodation was then very much smaller than it is to-day.

17. There are we to understand that the Department have entered into an arrangement with the Great Southern Railway not to press them to improve matters at present?—The Department has decided not to press them for the present owing to the financial crisis.

Mr. FIELD.—I think that is a very curious arrangement to enter into.

Mr. PRESTON.—I may perhaps reiterate what I have said with regard to Kilkenny, that the Great Southern Railway Co. endeavoured to buy land to extend that station. They failed in their negotiations at the time, and were unable to proceed further. They asked the Department to assist them in acquiring land from the public body that owned the adjoining land. The Department was not in a position to do so. The Department decided owing to the financial crisis not to press them for the present.

The CHAIRMAN.—I cannot go further having regard to the arrangement.

18. Mr. BARRYMORE (to Witness).—With regard to this question of free-stalling waggon, is it not the case that on the great majority of Irish towns the fairs take place either in the street or in the Market Green?—Yes, especially in the South.

19. Except in rare instances there is not what you would call market accommodation—pens and so on?—No, we are very backward in this country in that respect.

20. And there is no water provided in a great number of cases?—No.

21. And the cattle have to stand in the streets of the towns, which have often broken road metal all over them?—Yes.

22. All these conditions obtain?—Yes.

23. Then as regards Swinfold, does it not strike you that the free-stalling of waggon is largely brought about by the failure of the Local Authorities to provide such accommodation in the fairs as would enable the pigs to be segregated and divided up and the commercial business which is necessary gone through?—I am not exactly sure of that. The position very often is this—in fact the procedure is this—a buyer buys two or three pigs and he gives the seller a ticket. The seller proceeds with that ticket and the swine to the station and he hands up the ticket to some man representing the purchaser of the station, and it is then that the delay occurs. Until the seller has loaded, or assisted in loading, the pigs into the trucks he does not get paid. I don't see if there was segregating done in the town that that difficulty you mention would be met fully. It might be in part.

24. It is the case, is it not, that a man will buy a lot of pigs, all of which he will not require. All of them may be not suitable for his purpose, but he buys the lot. At the railway station he sells those he does not require to someone else?—Yes.

25. Would you think it would be better to have that part of the business done before the station is reached?—Yes; the selling out causes delay.

26. It is a necessary thing in the incidence of the trade as the business is conducted. If accommodation were provided in the town where the fair is held would it not very largely avoid this second fair at the station?—I don't think it would. I think you would be bound more or less to have some calling out at the station. I say it is not conducive to the better transit of the animals and it causes delay, but I am afraid that whatever arrangements you make you would have some discrimination of lots of swine at the station.

27. I rather agree, but do you think it is incumbent upon the Railway Company to provide such accommodation as will enable a second fair to take place quite smoothly at the station?—No, I don't. Perhaps it is the Cabritstown Fair is in your mind.

28. I have a number of fairs in my mind?—On your face such procedure does not occur so much as in the West and South.

29. The CHAIRMAN.—You are familiar with the files on the subject. Do you know if the Railway Companies ever pleaded this as a defence?—Yes, in the South-West, especially in County Kerry.

The CHAIRMAN.—If we go into a general discussion of the Local Authority to provide proper market accommodation it would be interminable. I think I have gone on this matter as far as is necessary. I said already that I am not prepared in view of the circumstances to press this matter further before the Committee. I shall see what the Department's powers are in the matter, and I shall undertake to enforce them wherever they are, and I think this discussion may stop now.

Mr. BARNARD.—That is quite satisfactory to me provided it is understood that there is no animadversion upon any failure on any part of the Railway Company to conduct this cattle business properly, because if that was to come about I should then like to develop the discussion as regards the Local Authorities, who are very much more to blame in the delay in this matter than the Railway Companies. That would take a great deal of time, and I don't wish to do that provided the other thing is dropped.

The CHAIRMAN.—I can see that this controversy can develop into anything, and I am not prepared for that. I put the question to Mr. Freestone as to whether the Department's powers are adequate.

Mr. McEVENOCH.—I would like to ask a general question of Mr. Freestone—whether it is your experience or whether it has come to your knowledge that anyone who proposes to interfere with an established custom at a fair, however inconvenient such custom may be, brings everybody in the place down on him telling him he is going to spoil the fair?—I agree quite with that. I have been hearing of proposals to better this matter in the past 25 years, but it is still going on.

Mr. FURCA.—Our Cattle Traders' Association brought what influence it could to bear on certain Local Authorities to provide proper Fair Grounds as the Association is opposed to fairs being held in the streets, and we got into universal dispute over it.

The CHAIRMAN.—There will be an animadversion on this matter unless Mr. Bagnall has fair notice of it.

Mr. BARNARD.—Perhaps we had an earlier notice on my railway to deal with than in other parts of the country, where the custom had been more strikingly established.

Mr. The CHAIRMAN.—Before you go Mr. Freestone, I just want to draw your attention to one point—our Inspector's Report with regard to the sanitary con-

dition of the Salford Station. He states—"The condition of the existing loading bank does not admit of thorough cleansing and disinfecting after being used by animals. There is no means of drainage, and the boundary wall is dry, falling in places, and does not admit of cleansing and disinfecting. A large number of the waggons used for the conveyance of pigs had been only partly cleaned. These trucks had not been scraped, or washed with water. Large quantities of the droppings had been left on the sides of the vehicles, which were badly lime washed. The following trucks had been used for pigs and had not been cleaned or disinfected at all." You would not say that that is very satisfactory?—No, nor do I say that numerous reports are not received from the Inspectors from time to time about unsanitary conditions; that is a matter that we can deal with and do deal with severely sometimes.

Mr. FIELD.—Sometimes?—Well, I may say often. We have prosecuted the Great Southern Railway Co., and may I be permitted to say that we don't get much assistance from the gentlemen engaged in the cattle trade in regard to the cleansing of trucks. They appear to be quite willing to see them so they get them, whether they are clean or not.

Mr. BARN.—They would have to use them or do without them.

Mr. BARNARD.—It frequently happens at a station that you have a certain number of cleaned waggons and a certain number that are not cleaned. It is intended to put the cleaned waggons to the bank and withdraw the uncleaned ones, and it often happens that cattle are put into the uncleaned ones without the permission of the Company.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Are not the owners of cattle charged by the Railway Company in this terminal charge for whitewashing?

Mr. BARNARD.—Yes. The case that I have mentioned is frequent. In a string of waggons there are often some dirty ones which are not intended to be used, but cattle may be rushed into those before they can be drawn away from the bank again after placing the clean ones.

The CHAIRMAN.—The state of matters leaves much to be desired, and so far as the Department is concerned I shall take care to find out what their powers are, and promise that they will be used.

Mr. PHILIP McNULTY, Transit Inspector of the Department, examined.

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. McNulty is one of the Inspectors of the Department, and he has prepared a typewritten statement that he can be examined on dealing with the following points:—

1. Movement of labour.
2. Conveyance to producing districts of tillage requisites (Fertilisers, Seeds, and Agricultural Implements and Machines), and of cattle feeding stuffs, fodder and litter.
3. Transport from producing districts of agricultural products.
4. Special provision for small consignments which are to some extent inevitable in a country of comparatively small farm holdings.

Mr. Perhaps, Mr. McNulty, you would read your statement for us?—Yes.

" I.—Movement of Labour.

" The Irish Railway Companies have not, as far as I know, ever given any special facilities for the movement within this country of Agricultural Labourers. For a long period prior to the year 1902 special reduced fares were given to Irish emigrants when leaving the country to remain permanently out of it, and were also given to migratory labourers who left Ireland each Spring to work for farmers in Great Britain, and returned to this country in the late Autumn.

" Probably the explanation of this absence of special facilities for internal movement of labour lay in the fact that in those parts of Ireland that have come into pasture solely, very few labourers are required, while in the parts in which tillage continues, notably in Ulster and a few counties in the South, there has existed locally such a number of labourers as met the demand. The labourers who migrated usually to Great Britain were drawn mainly from the counties of Mayo, Donegal, Roscommon, Sligo, and Galway, where

there is comparatively little tillage, and most of them either occupied or were the sons of occupiers of small uneconomic farm holdings on which such cultivation as was possible was carried on during the absence of the migrants by the women, children, and aged members of their families. Within the past fifteen years, according to the Migratory Labour Returns, there has been a considerable decrease in the number of migrant labourers from the five counties named. Comparing the number for the year 1902 with the number for the year 1914, the following were the numbers of migrants per 1,000 of the male inhabitants of 20 years and upwards:—

	Year 1902.	Year 1914.
" County Mayo, ...	198.5	77.8
" Donegal, ...	44.3	30.8
" Roscommon ...	68.6	14.0
" Sligo, ...	30.0	9.5
" Galway, ...	49.4	8.9

" The total number of male migrants that went to Great Britain from the foregoing five counties in the year 1902 was 37,796, while the number in the year 1914 was 2,691, or a decrease of 10,905. Within the same period the number of migrants from the whole of Ireland fell from 19,022 in the year 1902 to 7,112 in the year 1914—a decrease of 11,910. This decrease in the migration of labour may to some extent be due to the beneficial results of the work of the Congested Districts Board in the west and north-west, and to the granting of Old Age Pensions.

" As the proposal to increase the food production of the country may, it is assumed, have special reference to the breaking up of grass lands in the districts where labourers are at present very few, the question of transference of agricultural labourers from places in Ireland where they are in excess of local requirements

and of increased facilities for movement of them becomes worthy of serious attention, and it may be deemed advisable by the Committee to make representation to the Irish Railway Companies on the matter.

"I understand that in Belgium prior to the war numbers of farm workers migrated each year to the north of France. These workers were charged very low fares, and the majority of them returned to their homes each week-end. There was also much movement of labour within the confines of Belgium itself.

"2. *Concessions to Producing Districts of Temporary Regulations, Cattle Feeding Stuffs, etc.*

"3. *Transport from Producing Districts of Agricultural Products.*

"In most of the districts of Ireland where tillage is at present carried on extensively the railway companies have special reduced rates in operation for most of the farmers' requirements in the way of fertilisers, seeds, and cattle feeding stuffs of all kinds, and for the conveyance from these districts of the various descriptions of produce. But as regards the districts where there is little or no tillage at present the rates in existence are generally the normal or class rates, consequently such traffic as offers has to bear higher freight charges than those that apply to the like traffic from the more extensively cultivated districts. Such disparity in cost of transit imposes an appreciable handicap on the users of railways in underdeveloped or partly developed districts, and by rendering tillage in the latter comparatively unprofitable has a tendency to discourage increase of production. It seems desirable that the Irish Railway Companies should be invited to consider the question of applying to these underdeveloped or partly developed districts, during the period of the war, a scale or scales of rates that would be in reasonable proportion to the rates now existing for like traffic to and from more extensively cultivated districts. This could be done by the introduction of one, or more, common mileage scale of charges, similar in character to the one that has been in use on the Great Northern Railway of Ireland for many years past. Such scale or scales should be made applicable to through booking between all Irish railways, except in cases where break of gauge or absence of physical connection of railway lines necessitated a transfer of charge which would have to be added to the mileage scale of charges. This suggestion applies to internal traffic in Ireland only. The question of cross-Channel rates presents greater difficulties, as any extension of existing special cross-Channel rates would involve negotiation with Steamship Companies (some of them Railway owned, others not), and with English and Scotch Railway Companies, and would require prolonged consideration—especially in view of the interests concerned in the different routes.

"4. *Special Facilities for Small Consignments.*

"The smaller consignments are subject at present to materially higher rates of transit charges than those that apply to large consignments, consequently the smaller consignor is placed at a disadvantage in the markets. On the Continent this disability is overcome by recourse to the agency of an *Expéditeur*, or forwarding agent, who receives small consignments at a centre and bills them for transport purposes. In this way the benefit of rates applicable to the larger consignments is gained—the forwarding agent charging a percentage for his services, but the owner of the goods is enabled to have his small consignments transported at a rate appreciably lower than he would have to pay if they were loaded by him direct to the carrying companies. Such an agency system of transport of produce and merchandise obtained in Ireland many years ago, but is gradually disappearing. It might be possible to revive it with the object of inducing increased food production by the smaller farmers, although there are difficulties apart from any that might be raised by the railway companies. Local trade rivalry is so keen that many exporters of produce use every endeavour to conceal the names of their customers and even the destination of their consignments. In some instances they adopt the course of consigning their traffic under a mark to a place short of the ultimate destination and sending by post instructions for re-consignment. As an alternative to the forwarding

agent, the railways might be requested to consider the question of applying during the war the 'small' scale to consignments not exceeding one cwt. instead of 5 cwt. as at present.

"Difficulties is experienced in some instances in having produce of a perishable nature despatched by Goods train to ports in time for shipment. Railway companies now and then meet this by sending the traffic forward as 'van' goods, i.e., in a van attached to a passenger train but charged at goods rates. A more general application of this policy, where practicable, would facilitate the despatch of produce from branch lines and outlying districts and so encourage increased production."

34. The figures of migrants you have given refer only to males?—Yes. The number of females is comparatively small, and I have not taken them into account.

35. Mr. BARN.—How would the mileage scale you have suggested compare with the present rates?—It is a reduction mainly for quantity. I would rather not go into the question of the comparison of rates in the different companies, but taken on the whole so far as feeding stuffs, manures and agricultural implements are concerned the special rates that they have fixed would work out roughly about the same as those in existence on the Great Northern.

36. What would be the advantage?—If you had that scale in operation over the whole of Ireland, and especially in districts where there is no tillage at the present time, it would tend to the promotion of food production.

37. If there is not any difference between the present rates and the mileage rates where would the advantage be?—The mileage rates are less than normal or class rates, which are in existence in the underdeveloped districts.

38. Do you suggest that we should ask the railway company to carry the goods at the same rate or scale as the Great Northern?—The Great Northern has a mileage scale in existence, and most of the points in point rates of the other Companies are fixed on the same principle. What I suggest is that a general mileage scale ought to be made applicable to the whole of Ireland. A man will then know what rate his produce will have to pay to get to the market before he grows it at all.

39. Mr. FITZ.—Would that mean pooling also of the consignments?—No, it does not involve that.

40. It leaves every producer to act on his own initiative?—My suggestion is that a mileage scale of rates based upon existing special rates be made by all companies for food stuffs, manures and seeds so that where no special rates are in existence the farmer will know before he puts a plough into the ground what rates his produce will have to bear.

41. The CHAIRMAN.—Why should they propose a rate for a district which produces nothing?—Rates should be available for the development of tillage in such a district. Mileage rates are in use generally on the Continent. The Great Northern introduced the mileage scale—it is the only railway in Ireland that has it in operation. Colonel Plowden gave very strong evidence as to the utility of such a scale before the Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways, and the Commission agreed that it was both a benefit to the public and advantageous to the railways.

42. Mr. FITZ.—Can you tell us anything about the difficulty of obtaining through rates from certain stations here in Ireland?—I do not propose to go into that, it is such a difficult question.

43. The CHAIRMAN.—Coming back to the cattle business, is it the case that you cannot now in shipping cattle get a through rate from any part of Ireland because when the cattle arrive at Birkenhead they are detained ten hours and the through rate expires?—That is so.

The CHAIRMAN.—I must say to the cattle dealers who are here that I have heard a great deal about the iniquities of the Companies on the ten hours delay at Birkenhead. I wish they devoted more attention to the breaking of the through rates; they would produce more effect in the House of Commons if they did so.

44. Mr. McNulty.—There is a great deal of feeling throughout the country as to the disability under which the small producer labours by reason of the proportionately high rate he has to pay on small consignments as compared with what a large consignor has to pay. In Ulster, where there are very good local mar-

lets as a rule, traffic is handed over to the railway companies in sufficient volume to enable tenders to take advantage of any special rates for bulk consignments, and in other parts of Ireland the same may be said of the main lines of railways. The difficulties in regard to small consignments arise in somewhat remote districts where there is a comparatively small quantity of produce marketed and where people who send it forward to cross-Channel stations are usually small country shopkeepers who buy produce from farmers or cottiers and who, owing to jealousies, will not pool their consignments. I have dealt in my evidence with the only points in regard to which I think transit is involved.

45. Mr. BORN.—With regard to the proposal to increase the food production of the country, I think if we had a representation from the railways that they would fall in as far as possible with these recommendations of Mr. McNulty that this is as far as we can go on this matter.

46. Mr. FLEMING.—Would it not be advisable, if possible, to adopt Mr. McNulty's suggestion about decreasing the difficulty of getting labourers to go from one part of the country to another. In my experience in Blackrock and other places we find great difficulty in getting the men to go away. I don't know whether the Labour Bureau has adopted that system or not. I am sure the railways would fall in with such an arrangement. With regard to migration, it seems rather a curious thing that the railways have acted as emigration agents in this matter. I think that that is a policy which ought not to be continued when we want the people at home to go into the Army or cultivate the land. I got a letter yesterday about eggs and about the transit of perishable articles. Have you, Mr. McNulty, had many complaints about eggs being broken when they have gone across to England?—Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN.—That is hardly in Mr. McNulty's line now. I have a witness who will give direct evidence on that.

47. Mr. McDONALD.—What time do these migratory labourers leave the country?—In early Spring.

48. And how long do they remain away?—Until after the potatoes are dug.

49. More than half a year?—About eight months.

50. You said that they were the sons of small farmers or small farmers themselves?—Yes.

51. Are they regarded in their own locality as labourers at all?—No.

That is my own experience. They don't like to be ranked as labourers, and the question is are they available for labour.

52. THE CHAIRMAN.—Is it not a fact that they go to England and Scotland as labourers?—Harvest men they like to have themselves called.

53. They go as labourers?—Yes.

54. Are you quite sure that the Irish labourers or the occupying owner would be so ready to go to the north of Ireland as he is to go to Scotland?—I think if the farmers in the North would pay them the same rate of wages as they get in Scotland, they would.

Mr. FLEMING.—That is very doubtful.

55. Sir HENRY PEARSON.—Is it not a fact that migratory labourers get into the habit from generation to generation of going to the same district, even to the same employer in England and Scotland?—Yes.

56. And that it would be rather difficult to get them to abandon the habit in favour of migration in Ireland?—I do not doubt that, but from the figures I have given here you will see that there has been a falling off in the number of migratory labourers of nearly two-thirds. The reason I gave the figures was that I thought that, in themselves, they provide evidence of a very considerable number of what we might call skilled agricultural labourers being available in the west of Ireland for the cultivation of the land within the country.

57. Is there any evidence to show that labourers who formerly migrated are remaining in Ireland as labourers or as people working on their own farms? My own idea is that they are working on their own holdings?—During the last fifteen years the Congested Districts Board have been doing a good deal of work in enlarging uneconomic holdings in the west of Ireland, and I deprecate that the employment given on these holdings is one of the causes that is preventing the migration to England and Scotland. There must be a very considerable number of these former tenants available in the country. Before the Old Age Pensions were granted they had to take their labour abroad as a

matter of course. About the year 1912 I took out some figures with regard to Old Age Pensions in the County Mayo and I found that the amount given in pensions within a year exceeded by thousands of pounds the aggregate amount that the migratory labourers brought back from Great Britain. I think the condition of the people has so much improved that they stay at home.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—The erection of labourers' cottages is another factor in diminishing the number of labourers leaving the country.

58. THE CHAIRMAN.—The real point Mr. McNulty has touched on is the possibility of getting the labourers to go from districts where there is labour in excess to districts where there is no labour in Ireland. I have a preconceived notion that wild horses would not take these labourers to Ulster?—So far as Ulster is concerned, I do not think the problem will be so pressing as in those parts of Ireland where there has been no tillage. Of course there are other points in regard to the difficulty of labour that I have not touched on—the question of employers paying a rate of wages similar to what is paid in England and Scotland, and secondly there is the question of housing. There are matters that I have not touched on. I have confined myself to the question of transit.

59. Would you give us some light, Mr. McNulty, upon this question of the small consignment of goods. You think the difficulty is confined to the branch lines?—Yes, largely, and to very small markets.

60. The difficulty here is confined to the districts served by branch lines?—Generally speaking, I think that is so.

61. Do you think the method of dealing with small consignments is satisfactory?—No, I think the small consignment is placed at a disadvantage compared with the large consignment. In Ireland in the seventies, there was an agent who did very considerable business with regard to the transport of produce and merchandise, but he has disappeared.

62. Mr. FLEMING.—Why?—That is a very big question to go into. The extension of railways into the outlying districts is one of the reasons, and the railway companies having now provided machinery for dealing with small parcels. One way of dealing with the matter is that the railways might be asked to apply during the war the "small" scale to consignments not exceeding 1 cwt. instead of 5 cwt. as at present.

63. THE CHAIRMAN.—That does not meet the case I have mentioned at all. All along these branch lines there are small packets—eggs, butter, fruit, &c. Now do you propose getting these profitably disposed of for the producer. Do you think a co-operative system for these small consignments would be successful?—Well, so far as the produce that we have now is concerned—

64. Take me as a co-producer?—In very few cases does such traffic pass directly from the producer to the consumer. It passes through the hands of a local middleman. That man may be a local shopkeeper as regards eggs or butter or a small dealer in the district. As regards the present consignments, I don't know whether you can ever get co-operation amongst them, because they have small trade circles and try to corner the districts in which their trade lies.

65. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Have not the facilities given by the Parcel Post and the cheapening of rates a lot to do with this business?—The Parcel Post has reduced consignments by railways. The railway companies have had for years past very low rates in operation for market, garden and farm produce. The eggs consumed in my house come from Donegal. They come to me at a cost of 6d. or 8d. in a six-dozen case delivered a mile and a half from Dublin. That is very much cheaper than Parcel Post.

66. THE CHAIRMAN.—You and I can get eggs and butter for the cwt. far cheaper than by parcels post?—Certainly.

67. But as regards the multitude of these people, is there nothing but the shopkeeper for them as a middleman?—Not under existing trading conditions. There may be a small egg or poultry dealer in the towns who would purchase these eggs from the producer.

68. Is it your opinion that the jealousy between man and man is such that they would decline to pool their produce rather than let each other know their business?—Yes, that class of men—the small shopkeeper or dealer in the town.

69. I am not speaking of them. Is the feeling of jealousy between the producer of this small commodity

so strong that he would refuse to deal because his neighbour would know what he was doing, and what he was getting?—Yes, in the outlying districts there is such a feeling of suspicion.

70. Mr. O'NEILL.—That is amongst the producers?—Yes. In larger centres there are more amenable to ordinary business principles, but in the outlying districts they do not want their neighbours to know very much about their business. They endeavour to conceal it even from the commissioners of the Department.

71. Mr. HORACE PLUNKETT.—You studied the transit of produce all over Europe?—I have.

72. Is it not a fact that in every progressive country in Europe that the farmers do combine together in the co-operative system in the sending of their produce?—I think that the "Expeditors" or forwarding agent is the man that mainly bulks traffic so as to get the advantage of low rates.

73. But still the Co-operative Societies over the Continent may use the "Expeditors" as their agent, but they do bulk their consignments?—I did not go behind the "Expeditors" for the transit question.

74. Have you any knowledge of the co-operative movement in Ireland?—Not beyond that of the men in the street.

75. Let us take the case of the creameries. As you know the creameries have revolutionised the system of marketing of butter in Ireland?—Yes.

76. You can remember when all the butter in Ireland was produced in a very small way in the homes of the people, and now the quantity is produced in factories increasingly owned by the farmers themselves. In this case is not there in the bulking and regularising of consignments an immense saving in the cost of transit?

77. The CHAIRMAN.—Are you aware that more than half of the creameries in Ireland are not co-operative, but proprietary?—No.

My point, Mr. Horace, is don't hold up the great creamery movement in Ireland as being a co-operative movement, because as a matter of fact a large number of the creameries are proprietary.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I said that they were becoming increasingly co-operative, which I think, is a fact. If that is relevant to the inquiry, the Department has the statistics, and so could will furnish them.

Mr. McDONALD.—The creameries which get in the milk and make the butter are not a fair illustration on the question of bulking consignments.

The CHAIRMAN.—My case is quite clear. So far as the creameries are co-operative, your question, Sir Horace, is legitimate, but it is not fair to say that a proprietary creamery acts in the same way as co-operative creameries.

78. Mr. McNALLY.—I do not think the question of co-operation affects the question of transit at all, because prior to the formation of creameries the farmers' wives brought in their butter to markets where there were two or three buyers, who sent away much larger consignments than any creamery now does. I remember going into a market town where there were two buyers. They sent out consignments of butter, which as regards weight would certainly be equal to the largest consignment sent by any creamery.

79. Mr. MCNEILL.—Those men who send in bulk benefited, but did the producer get any benefit? Was it not the butter buyer who got the benefit?—That does not affect the question of transit.

80. The CHAIRMAN.—There may be a more mundane consideration than we have been considering operating against any co-operative system as a whole. Not only the milk goes to the creamery, but in many cases the eggs, and so you think the farmer's wife has something to say to that. The eggs had been the property of the farmer's wife, and now they are all bulked in the creamery account and she gets nothing?—I don't think transit has any relation to that.

81. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I understand you to say that in backward districts there is a barren difficulty in bulking their produce in order to get cheaper rates?—Yes.

82. Do you think that that difficulty is probably insuperable?—No.

83. But you agree that it would be very much to the benefit of the country if this difficulty can be surmounted by a system of co-operation?—Do you mean from the economic point of view, because I am not prepared to go into that aspect of the question.

84. My suggestion is that if their produce were bulked it would be more cheaply carried, and that it would be desirable that people should get over the difficulty that prevents the bulking?—Yes.

85. Mr. BOND.—Would not the agent who was collecting these small parcels of goods be doing the work of the railway company?—The bulking of consignments by the railway companies in small parcels is expensive. A more simple solution would be to get the 8 cwt. scale made to apply to 1 cwt. during the war.

86. Mr. McDONALD.—Is it not a fact that the railways cannot carry small parcels at the same rate as larger consignments?—That is so.

87. They are willing to take any produce if it is delivered to them in bulk?—Yes.

88. You say that the small people won't combine to deliver in bulk because they are prepared to pay a higher rate in order to maintain secrecy rather than to bulk their goods without the secrecy?—Yes. The proposal I made as regards an agent is not a novel one. The system, as I have stated, obtains throughout the whole Continent. It existed in Ireland, and I suggest that as a temporary measure it might be revived.

89. Mr. BOWMAN.—I think there is some little misapprehension on this matter. I know something about this eggs and poultry traffic, which is practically all sent in bulk?—Yes, in the North.

90. The people who bulk these commodities are merchants, and I know that nothing this Committee or the Department can do will ever induce these people to combine, because they are uncombining. It can't be done. These goods are for the most part sent under mark in order that the names of the persons to whom they are forwarded cannot get out. This is, of course, due to trade jealousy. The man who has more commercial ability than his fellow does not want to give away his commercial connections. That is the reason that they won't combine. It may be deplorable, but it is a strong reason?—Yes.

91. Mr. BOWMAN.—You are speaking for the small dealer as distinct from the farmer?—Yes. I cannot say anything about the producer. The merchant may be in some cases a producer himself.

92. The CHAIRMAN (to Mr. BOWMAN).—Have you ever heard of Robert M'Ilroy?—Yes. He is an egg merchant, butter merchant, and poultry merchant in Ballymore.

93. He is practically dealing as an individual and is a member of the highest character?—Yes. People from 15 or 20 miles around Ballymore give him their eggs and he sells for them and he deducts commission. He takes in the produce from the people and gives them a receipt for the quantity, and sells in the best market and is paid by commission on his sales.

94. Have you heard that that system which he carries on solves the question of co-operation?—I never heard it discussed in connection with the question of co-operation.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—I wish we had more like him. The CHAIRMAN.—That is the solution of the whole thing.

Mr. FARR.—Co-operation is not really practised on the Great Northern line.

Mr. BOWMAN.—I said I have no knowledge of the producer, but the merchant does not combine. There is a good deal of consignment of goods under mark.

95. Mr. BOWMAN (to Mr. FARR).—You have suggested that the rates on 8 cwt. should apply to 1 cwt. during the war?—Yes.

96. Coming back to these large creameries, I cannot help observing that the boxes of butter exported are 14 and 20 lbs. That would show that there is a large bulk of consignments under 1 cwt.?—The packing is in 28 and 35 lbs. boxes as a rule, especially for cross-Channel traffic, where the consignments would be over 1 cwt. Very rarely is the single package sent, so far as I know. I have seen in some places in Ireland where butter is not produced to any considerable extent, the hotels getting butter from other producing districts. There one will find one or two small packages in a consignment, but I don't think that can be looked upon as a steady recognised trade. It applies mainly to butter made by Clercs of Limerick. I think the package trade is due to the failure of obtaining supplies from the usual sources.

97. You raise the question of through rates on cattle?—Yes.

98. Have you any knowledge of what the result of that has been?—No. With regard to the complaint of railway companies, that in the case of cross-Channel export cattle were taken out of their hands for hours, we investigated that but we found that there was not the grievance that there was thought to be at first, and that complaint has practically disappeared.

99. The CHAIRMAN.—I must object to that—I am referring to the case of railway companies objecting to through booking where they had not the traffic completely under their own control.

100. Mr. BAKER.—What do you think of the German system giving special rates to agriculturists who are in backward districts—say 800 miles from a large centre of population in order to get over the geographical disadvantages. We have not got anything like that in this country. It occurred to me that we might have it on a modified scale, and that it would be one of the factors in increasing traffic if we were to get a special rate from those districts to the nearest consuming centre?—Yes, that is practically my suggestion.

101. Say there was a place in this country 200 miles from Dublin, the German system would be to give encouragement to agriculturists in that backward district by treating them as if they only lived 60 or 65 miles away?—That German system applies to traffic exported.

102. It does not apply to that?—I found that in Germany local rates are fixed on a zone principle, which has the effect of constituting, as an area of supply, the country within about 60 miles radius from a given centre. I have a fairly extensive knowledge of the rates charged for traffic in Ireland, and having regard to the fact that the cost of railway administration has increased I think the public are fairly well satisfied with the existing charges for measures and seeds and for agricultural produce carried from developed districts to the markets. If a mileage scale of proportionately low rates were in existence it would facilitate food production in underdeveloped districts, and help the Committee in their work.

103. Is the suggestion underlying that that class "C" rates are too high?—Yes.

104. Do you agree that Class C up to 30 miles is reasonable?—I do not. It is in excess of the actual rates charged by our railway companies. In Ireland owing to the number of sea ports the average haul of traffic does not exceed 60 miles.

105. To the best of my recollection, in the North the Class C rate covers all our rates up to 40 miles, and after that they have a system of meeting the geographical disadvantage by reducing the rates; where the company had for many years met the geographical difficulty by waiving their powers to collect 6s. 8d. a ton and only charged 4s. Have you known any case in the South or West of Ireland of more than 4 per cent. being added to the special rate?—There may be, but it did not come under my notice.

Mr. BAWWELL.—The question of keeping the same proportion in charges when the 4 per cent. was put on was considered by all the railways and they practically gave an undertaking that the proportion should remain the same, and I believe that the Irish railways have done their best to maintain the proportion.

Mr. BAKER.—That is my experience about the North.

Mr. BAWWELL.—You will find that is the case on all the lines.

106. Mr. O'CONNOR.—In cases of damage in transit, how is that met? Would you approve of goods being sent under insurance?

Mr. BAWWELL.—The companies risk rate is the insurance rate.

Mr. O'NEILL.—Is not that a high rate?

Mr. BAWWELL.—Yes, in comparison with the owner's risk rate.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Are not all consignors asked to sign a consignment note which exempts the railway company from loss sustained by delay?

Mr. BAWWELL.—Yes, except through wilful misconduct.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—If anything happens in transit and the goods are not delivered in time to the market and

the consignee asks for compensation, is he not barred by signing the consignment note?

Mr. BAWWELL.—Yes, he gets consideration under the owner's risk rate.

107. Mr. O'CONNOR (to Witness).—The suggestion came before an inquiry that all these things that are sent to a market and are perishable should be sent in the most expeditious manner possible and that if the railway people did not deliver them in time that the owner should be compensated?—The company offers them that practically is the company's risk rate.

108. Is there not such a difference between the two rates that the owner will take the risk of availing of the lower rate?—The company offers him a very good premium for his insurance in the difference between the two rates.

109. What about compulsory insurance?—There is, practically, insurance in the company's risk rate, but when the owner's risk rate is offered as an alternative and the owner accepts it, he transfers to his own shoulders the responsibility which the company takes under the company's risk rate.

110. Is your opinion would you approve of an all round compulsory insurance by every owner and sender to all distances over land and sea?—I don't think so. From my knowledge of the rates and the very great difference between the company's risk rate and the owner's risk rate, my opinion is that the public make money on the transaction by the self insurance, and I don't think therefore that compulsion should be applied to senders of traffic generally.

111. Does it not place the trader at a disadvantage who wishes to have his stuff sent at an insured rate as compared with the man who does not insure?—You will never get the users of railways to work on uniform lines.

112. Mr. BAKER.—I think the suggestion is that if the railway companies were compelled to carry goods only on an insured basis the cost of insurance would be so trifling that it would not be felt. You say that the owner of the goods was the gainer if he took the owner's risk rate. I want to point out that the weakness of that argument is that a large merchant can afford to take that risk on the law of averages, but to the moderate or small merchant one serious loss would be a calamity. The point is that the losses are so small on the year's trading to a railway company that they can afford to have all the risk, including the insurance, fixed at a little over the owner's risk rate?—I see the point.

113. Mr. FIELD.—At the present time there is a great agitation in England with regard to this owner's risk rate. Have you heard about it in Ireland?—No.

In connection with live stock and eggs and perishable commodities there is an enormous amount of complaint. If this insurance rate as advocated by Mr. O'CONNOR were brought into force it would lead to the railway companies taking greater care of these particular articles if they were responsible for their safe carriage.

114. The CHAIRMAN.—I am going to refer you to the specific case of Mr. Belle Ball, Ball's Grove, Drogheda. He is a market gardener, or rather he has discontinued to cultivate market gardening. He writes to the Department stating that he would be very glad to hear if anything could be done favourable to the shipment of vegetables. He points out that on the 18th of June he sent to a Glasgow firm the following goods—Lettuce, 2 x 8 dozens—16 at 12d., 12s. 4d.; radish, 4 x 12—30 at 6d., 21 17s. 6d.; total 42 10s. 10d. The carriage cost 22 6s. 3d.; the insurance charge 4 6d., and the commission 3s. 10d., leaving a debit of 8d. on the transaction. He gives another case regarding goods which he sent to the same people, showing that after paying all charges his profit was only 3s. 6d. Mr. Belle Ball in his letter states, "I have had to abandon Liverpool; Wigan is impossible, and Dublin is hopeless." And with that remark about Dublin I am in hearty accord. He also says that he is considering seriously the question of giving up the business as it was throwing money away and he was simply working for the carrying companies.

Mr. FIELD.—What is the date of that letter?

The CHAIRMAN.—June of the present year.

The CHAIRMAN.—I have given you particulars of the case where Mr. Belle Ball states that the result of one transaction was a debit balance of 8d. Who would not be a market gardener? There is rather an improvement in the second case which he gives—that in which he shows a credit balance of 2s. 6d.

Mr. BARNES.—He got something out of that!

Mr. BARNES.—I know a good deal about Mr. Belle Ball, and I have found that his general statements are not always accurate. He says Dublin is hopeless. Our notes show that he can send to Dublin 50 lbs. of this produce for 1s. 2d. for any distance over 30 miles, and including delivery within the boundary.

Mr. BARNES.—He says he paid 13s. 8d.

Witness.—That is cross-Channel.

Mr. BARNES.—He had a direct steamer sailing from Drogheda, and that has nothing to say to Irish railways.

The CHAIRMAN.—I agree with his statement that Dublin is hopeless; from my own experience of the Dublin market, where there is a ring.

Mr. BARNES.—I was speaking of the transit, and I think the charges to Dublin for this class of goods are very reasonable.

The CHAIRMAN.—That is not what he means. He is not referring to the railway rates at all.

Mr. HORACE FRANKLIN.—We are discussing transit. The CHAIRMAN.—I am entitled to ask whether there is any possibility of a trade like this being facilitated instead of being killed. I am not quarrelling with the railways. I am not saying their rates are wrong. If Mr. Belle Ball's statements came before the House of Commons it would consider that Ireland was a very peculiar place to carry on business.

Witness.—(To Mr. BARNES).—You know these facts stated by Mr. Belle Ball are accurate?—I verified them.

Witness.—Do you think it possible to carry on market gardening on lines like these?—No, but—

117. Leave it there.

118. Mr. MACROBERT.—I think we ought to know Mr. McNulty.

Witness.—I interviewed Mr. Ball and got all the particulars from him as regards his traffic. I found it spread to two places, Liverpool and Manchester, he was satisfied with the rates, but he was not satisfied with the service, even though it was passenger train service, as the consignments had arrived after the markets had closed for the day. The result was that the vegetables were stale for the next day and he got only half price for them, which meant a considerable loss. In this case, where the margin of 2s. 6d. was returned to him, there is no special through rate in existence between Drogheda and Glasgow. There the service was satisfactory but the freight was not. Immediately on his bringing this matter to the notice of the Department it, I understand, made representations to the carrying companies and I believe the question of fixing a reasonable through rate is under consideration. To Wigan the rate was a normal rate. There was no special rate in existence. Both the rate and the service were unsatisfactory to Wigan. He had to pay the high normal rate and the vegetables were late for the market, so he lost considerably. This is not only a question of fixing a reduced rate in relation to those that exist for Liverpool and Manchester traffic, but it also means hastening the transit, because 24 hours delay in the marketing of vegetables means that they lose half their value.

119. Mr. GORDON.—In the case of Dublin he was referring to the market and not to the railway rates?—Yes. He is perfectly satisfied with the rates to Dublin, but the market is not right.

120. Mr. BARNES.—Is it not the case that the great bulk of garden produce is carried by the Irish railways at rates very much below the maximum?—Yes.

That is the only question I would wish to ask.

Mr. SEYMOUR SMITH, Department's Marketing Representative in Great Britain, examined.

121. The CHAIRMAN.—Did you prepare a statement, Mr. Smith?—Yes, a short memorandum on egg production.

Kindly read it for us?—The following is the statement:—

—Egg Production.—In many districts the shopkeeper handles eggs in a small way, but it is doubtful if he makes any appreciable profits on such transactions. It would seem that he takes up this line of business in order to retain customers who might otherwise be drawn off by a rival in trade who is prepared to accept eggs, and thus provide the means to purchase other goods from him. The result is that there is a large number of such dealers to whom eggs are but a side line in business, whose whole turnover in eggs is so small that they have not a sufficient supply to permit of careful grading and packing. In addition, these shopkeepers are tempted to try to make a little extra profit out of the business by shipping direct to merchants in Great Britain, usually on consignment, instead of selling their eggs to a shipper who is handling them on a large scale and can, therefore, pack carefully. It is such people who usually ship in the worst class of cases, their methods of business disposing them to economise in every way, so as to clear expenses with as little outlay as possible. It would be a very great advantage if this class of shipper could be eliminated, as the breakage from his consignments often averages 10 or 15 eggs per long hundred, roughly 10 per cent., although the merchant when rendering the account sales does not actually state the amount of deduction for the broken eggs, but will often render the account sales on an average net price, to lead the shipper to believe that the eggs had arrived safely. Merchants in Great Britain usually reckon that eggs from the better shippers are worth 8d. to 1s. per hundred more than a similar class and weight of egg from the small and indifferent shipper. Part of this amount they reckon as a safeguard against breakage; different packing, including the use of bed straw, and a slight difference due to extra freight. It clearly

proves that these shippers are not paying the producers what they really deserve, and as it may be taken as a trade axiom that all business done at a loss tends to extinguish itself, so all business done with a reasonable hope of profit tends to expand in area and increase in volume. If a recommendation could go forward that such dealers should sell to the recognised egg shippers it would tend to increased production, and also do away with many small consignments and thus lessen the breakage in the shipments to Great Britain. Regarding co-operative societies and creameries, I have the following suggestion to make—when handling eggs, co-operative societies and creameries might arrange to pay separately for them, as I have often heard it said that the women folk get no inducement to further the production of eggs when the eggs are handed to the co-operative society, as the eggs are included in one account with the milk, and the farmer himself gets all the benefit, whereas when sold in the market or to the bigger the woman gets the actual money for them. I would like to make a statement with regard to the transit of agricultural produce to Great Britain. On the whole it is satisfactory, and I have heard of many instances recently in which consignments of produce from Ireland to Great Britain have arrived in almost normal time, whereas the same class of goods despatched from centres such as Liverpool, Bristol, and Glasgow have taken several days longer to reach their destination. I have had some instances of this brought under my notice recently—one by a man in Inverness and the other case in Leeds.

122. As to breakage and packing, surely somebody in Ireland must pack their eggs properly?—I have known cases where the average breakage from North and South did not come to 2 per cent., whereas in the case of the shopkeepers to whom I have referred I have seen 170 or 180 eggs broken in a 6 h.b.d. case, i.e., in 720 eggs, and it is those men that are reducing the value of Irish eggs in the English markets. These people don't care how the eggs arrive, and rather than sell them on to an egg shipper they send them on to the English merchants themselves. They would rather do that even if they lost money on it.

115. You refer to Co-operative Societies—do they ship eggs?—Yes.

116. Does the Irish Wholesale Society ship the eggs?—Yes.

117. Are they better than the others?—From some of their centres they are good, but from others they are almost as bad as the small shippers. I pointed that matter out to the Irish Wholesale Society, and I was told that they had under consideration whether it would not be possible to bring all their eggs to Dublin or some other centre because the number of eggs broken was appalling.

118. Is that due to the eggs?—It is due to many causes—not so much to the eggs as to the material used as the cases and the straw, and to people not experienced in the handling of eggs undertaking the packing.

119. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Do you know the North Kilkenny Poultry Society at Ballyaggs?—Yes.

120. How are they doing?—I saw eggs of theirs in Liverpool last Saturday and the cases were absolutely sound. I reported the matter to the Department. The meeting between the boards was so good that I could pick eggs out with my fingers. This thing is not fair to the railway companies. I must say that the railway companies have their grievances as well as other people.

121. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Could not there be some arrangement made for standard boxes?—We have several standard boxes.

122. And not allow anyone to ship unless they have these standard boxes?—The railway company have to take the goods whether they are in standard boxes or not.

123. Mr. FLEMING.—Have you any suggestion to make as a result of your practical experience? Only the other day I had a complaint from an egg merchant in Glasgow. I would like if you could give us some suggestion that we could act on, because there appears to be an enormous waste of eggs through breakages. I am not a sympathiser with the railway companies, but I want to deal fairly with them.

The CHAIRMAN.—This is not a question of railway companies at all. It is pure carelessness.

Mr. FLEMING.—The majority of the people who make complaints apparently think it is.

The CHAIRMAN.—I have never investigated a complaint of that kind where the breakages were not due to using unsuitable boxes and to bad straw. The railway had nothing to do with the breakages.

The WITNESS.—I would recommend to stop the shipments of these small consignments because the man who does not handle eggs in the winter is not a legitimate shipper.

Mr. BURNES.—Many small farmers have an ambitious son when they wish to make an egg-shipper.

124. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT (to Mr. FLEMING).—Do you propose by legislation or by Order in Council that the small consignment of eggs should be forbidden?—Presumably I should like to see it, but I don't think you would get it in Ireland.

125. You would say that we should discourage it?—Yes.

126. Mr. BARNWELL.—Would it be your recommendation that the Department in communication with the Irish railways should suggest that the company should refuse to carry eggs except in a certain class of box approved by the Department?—Yes.

127. But that the legal position is hopeless—that the railway companies have to carry what they are sent?—That is so.

The CHAIRMAN.—That is the position.

128. Mr. BARNWELL.—It is the case that the bulk of these eggs are covered at the company's risk?—Yes, a large part, but a large part is also consigned at the owner's risk.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—What risk does the high railway rate cover?

Mr. BARNWELL.—That is the company's risk rate?

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Yes.

Mr. BARNWELL.—If the goods are covered at the company's risk the company has to take the risk and if the eggs are delivered broken the claim is paid, unless it is shown that the packing case was very bad.

The CHAIRMAN.—It comes to this, that the mischief arises from bad packing.

Mr. FLEMING.—Principally.

The CHAIRMAN.—I never had a case of that kind brought before me where I could convict the railway companies. I found that the people themselves were always to blame.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Is it not a fact that these goods conveyed at the company's risk are a big tax on the railway companies?

Mr. BARNWELL.—Yes; in fact the amounts paid have been so great that it is being considered by the companies whether they cannot try to get some relief from their liability for eggs conveyed under company's risk rates.

The WITNESS.—The breakages were no great three years ago that a steamship company refused taking eggs. There was a debit balance after they had paid claims for breakages.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—I would suggest that there should be a standard case or box for eggs, and that no railways should be asked to take eggs unless packed in these boxes.

Mr. O'NEILL.—You cannot do that without legislation.

129. Mr. O'CONNOR (to Witness).—It is your recommendation that these standard boxes should be always used, and that those who did not use them ought not to be allowed to send goods across Channel?—Yes; three years ago the Department went to a good deal of trouble trying to get the egg shippers in the North to try to form an Egg Shippers' Association, but we found some of the biggest egg shippers in the North absolutely refused to come in because they were jealous of their rivals.

130. The CHAIRMAN.—Do you know Mr. McIlhenny of Ballymoney?—Yes.

131. He is, I believe, a collector of small produce?—That is so.

132. Are there any co-operative societies in his district?—Yes, but he has practically wiped out one or two of them. He has drawn eggs as far away as Limerick.

133. The question of how to dispose of small produce will arise on the Report of this Committee. Can you tell us how long Mr. McIlhenny has been established in this business?—I think he has been working the trade in eggs many years, but with regard to the general trade he has taken in up very enthusiastically for the last four years. The people were so satisfied at his returns for their eggs that they pressed upon him to take up the sale of honey and apples and poultry. Mr. McIlhenny got 2s. 6d. per long hundred, i.e., 120 eggs, more for his eggs than almost any shipper in Ireland.

134. Mr. FLEMING.—Why?—Because the people he supplies when they get eggs from him know that they are getting an absolutely fresh egg. As to his system of packing, he sends his carts out every day, and they bring in the produce every night. The man going around weighs the eggs and gives the woman who supplies them a docket. The eggs are put into different boxes in the cart and they are all checked when they get to Ballymoney. If the eggs are specially good there is a note put alongside them. He makes a note of that fact. When he gets a certain quantity of eggs he gets into communication with his buyers and states his price, and the people he supplies are so satisfied that he has not half enough of eggs for them, and that is why he is being forced to go further afield to get his eggs. He will not buy eggs from the ordinary higgler because his name is behind the trade. Once or twice he did get eggs from them to make up a quantity, but the eggs were inferior and he stopped taking from the higgles altogether. Now he buys eggs from the actual producer. These eggs are all tested to see that they are not old. If any customer is caught bringing in stale eggs he is fined 2s. 6d. These fines are divided every half year amongst the customers who have supplied their eggs and who have not been fined at all. If a woman has been keeping eggs her neighbour will tell Mr. McIlhenny of that fact because it is to their advantage to get the woman with the stale eggs freed as the fines will be distributed over the others.

135. The business is not confined to eggs?—He also sells poultry.

136. What about fruit?—He is going in for fruit. He sells fruit for his branch of the Ulster Society in Ballymoney.

144. Does he buy butter?—Practically nothing yet, but he hopes to develop that business. He wants to get hold of one thing and thoroughly develop it before he takes up another.

145. Would you say that Mr. McIlhenny has the confidence of the people of the district?—Absolutely; in fact if we had twenty more Mr. McIlhennys in Ireland they would revolutionise the country.

146. Ireland is very poor if it cannot produce twenty more Mr. McIlhennys?—He had his father before him, and his father was well known and had the people behind him. It is very hard, owing to the reputation made by himself and his father, for an outsider to come in and compete against him. At first it was thought that his scheme would not succeed, that the people would not part with their eggs without getting their money for them, but they head him over their eggs freely on their getting a receipt. Mr. McIlhenny was the first in that district to refuse to take dirty eggs. He told the people that if they brought in dirty eggs that he would take off 3d. per dozen. The result is that they send the dirty eggs to other people and keep the clean ones for him.

147. Mr. BAEWELL.—To what extent does the selling of eggs by weight obtain except in the case of Mr. McIlhenny?—Very little. It would be the solution of the problem. Unless the eggs are sold by weight there is no inducement to bring in big eggs. Mr. McIlhenny's customers eat the small eggs and sell him the big ones.

148. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Don't the Co-operative Societies always buy by weight?—No. There was a fight over it, but they had to give way.

149. Mr. BAEWELL.—If the selling of eggs by weight became general, would it not result in a very much superior class of poultry being kept in the country?—I cannot say that, but if the selling by weight was general the breakages would be less.

150. Mr. BAEWELL.—Has it not occurred to you that instead of trying to wipe out the small men that some system of inspection at the point of shipment by officers having large powers, including the ordering back of eggs for re-packing, would be the solution?—That would tend that way but the space at ports is so limited that they cannot do that.

151. Mr. GORDON.—Regarding the Fruit Growers' Association in the North of Ireland, how do the growers market their produce?—We tried to get them to group their produce and send it as one consignment, but we found that these very men would not amalgamate, that they would rather pay an increased rate than co-operate.

152. Mr. PHILL.—They would not co-operate?—No; not only that, but the Department recommended them to legitimate sale in all the different towns in England, but they sent their produce to other men in the same towns, with the result that they got poor returns.

153. The CHAIRMAN.—The real question Mr. Gordon put is, so far as I apprehend it, do the Ulster Fruit Growers' Association combine by co-operative methods to market their goods?—They don't.

154. Why don't they do so?—It is just the suspiciousness and jealousy born in the people.

The Committee then adjourned.

SECOND SITTING FOR TAKING ORAL EVIDENCE—22ND JULY, 1913.

The Committee met at the Royal College of Science, Dublin, at 11 o'clock, a.m.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT WERE:

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., *Chairman*.

Mr. JOHN BAEWELL.
Mr. HUGH T. BARRIS, D.L., M.P.
Mr. C. F. BAILEY, M.A., LL.D.
Mr. ROBERT N. BOND.
Mr. ROBERT DOWDA, J.P.
Mr. WILLIAM PHILL, M.P.
Mr. T. P. GILL.
Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc.

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.
Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P.
Mr. HUGH DE P. MONTGOMERY, D.L.
Mr. GEORGE MURTAGHAN, J.P.
Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR.
Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P.
The Right Hon. Sir H. PLUNKETT, D.C.L.,
K.C.V.O.

Mr. E. A. M. MORRIS, M.A., B.L., *Secretary*.

Mr. R. A. ANDERSON, Secretary, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, examined.

155. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—What is your present position in the I.A.O.S., Mr. Anderson?—I am Secretary of the Society.

156. How long have you occupied that position?—Since 1894, when the Society was started.

157. Would you tell the Committee of your previous experience of Irish agriculture, especially in connection with attempts to start agricultural co-operation, before the I.A.O.S. was founded?—Yes. I was farming in County Cork from 1879 to 1884. I farmed about three hundred acres there, and after that I was appointed to manage the Castlestown estate at Donnybrook. The rental of the estate was £10,000 a year, and there was also a large home farm that I had under my supervision. While I was there I was invited to join the co-operative organisation movement, which was then in its early days, and I did so, giving half my time to that work and half to my other work, with the consent of my employer, Lord Castlestown. Before I went to Donnybrook to manage this estate I and several of my neighbours endeavored to organise a nursery near where I lived. We got all the necessary capital. We did not know very much about organisation, and our enterprise was then an experimental thing in the country, and the opposition of the Cork butter merchants was too much for the promoters.

158. Was that one of what are known as Canon Bagot's creameries?—He had nothing to say to it, but it was run very much on the lines he advocated. It was a joint stock company, but the farmers, who were the members, were obliged to take shares in proportion to the cows they owned. It is quite true that the dividend was not limited as it is in the co-operative society, but there was to be a fairly equitable distribution of profits, having regard to the fact that the shares were proportionate to the cows.

159. There were several other creameries on joint stock lines between 1881 and 1889?—A considerable number in that locality, and also in the Counties Tipperary and Limerick.

160. What happened to them?—Some of them are still existing, and some have become co-operative. Some have ceased to exist.

161. You have read the terms of Reference to this Committee?—Yes, I have. I would just like to say in connection with that, that, of course, we all assume in the Organisation Society that any improvement which is called for now in food production must be continued, or we hope will be continued, beyond 1913; otherwise it would be quite impossible to get farmers to make this special effort for quite a short period.

162. I think that that view is taken pretty generally by the Committee here. You have written a letter, by direction of your Committee, to the Secretary of this Committee, in which you state your belief that the I.A.O.S. can play an important part, and can be an effective agency in increasing the food production of Ireland?—Yes.

163. I take it that the Committee will want you to justify that belief, and that most of your evidence will be directed to that object?—Yes. Well, I may have to answer that question at some length; it involves a good deal. We in the Organisation Society hold, and I think most people agree with us, that the only way that you can increase production is by demonstrating to the producer that it is going to pay him. Once you do that, half of your difficulties are over. We have succeeded in starting over 1,000 societies—1,027 are the actual figures—with over 100,000 members, and a business turn-over for 1914 of nearly four million pounds.

164. What exactly do you mean by turn-over?—It is the business undertaken by these societies for their members as distinct from the business carried on by the unorganised individuals.

165. The CHAIRMAN.—What kind of societies are these?—Various kinds. There are about 400 creameries, about 200 agricultural societies, and about the same number of credit societies, and then there are poultry-keepers, and also societies for the ownership of implements. In the case of the most numerous and important classes of societies—the creameries—the membership and business are increasing steadily year by year. That is strong proof that they are realising the expectations of the farmers. The farmers in these districts speak quite freely about the enhanced profits they estimate they get. No one puts it at less than 20 or 25 per cent. In order that I may give an illustration of this I took out quite at random the figures in connection with five creameries in each of the four provinces. I took their business transactions for 1913 and contrasted them with 1912, which were the only complete year's statistics we have.

The witness handed in the following Return:—

Province.	1912.	1913.	Increase.
Ulster.	£100.	£113.11.	£13.11.
Dunsmo, ...	489.9.	411.11.	254.62.
Braid, ...	2402.	2970.	7288.
Ballymullard, ...	1684.	12074.	4410.
Glenn, ...	9629.	21615.	28216.
Omagh, ...	7887.	81229.	23823.
Munster.			
Lombardstown, ...	12510.	27125.	34076.
Ardfert, ...	10489.	12875.	8375.
Cloonsagh, ...	10624.	12299.	4625.
Berab, ...	31144.	23019.	34475.
Carrigoe, ...	7170.	10820.	3620.
Leinster.			
Callan, ...	19679.	18451.	2102.
Windsnap, ...	7168.	10294.	2076.
Kilmanow, ...	6723.	11203.	4310.
Ballynaw, ...	4201.	8832.	4621.
Inch, ...	3808.	1067.	1499.
Connaught.			
Drumohair, ...	7923.	8805.	221.
Garra, ...	4104.	7292.	3288.
Kilmacrenny, ...	8725.	5894.	129.
Ashorey, ...	5571.	13780.	7909.
Drumcliffe, ...	7806.	10706.	3400.
	120778.	299914.	120126.

Continuing, the Witness said:—I am speaking only of butter in every case. The business turn-over for 1913 was £153,778; in 1912 it was £128,914, showing an increase of £128,134.

166. Do you put in these figures as typical?—I do, because there are creameries where the increases are much larger than are shown in my table. I took these figures out at random, and I compared them with a number of other figures that I might put in. In order that the figures may be verified, I also hand in a copy of the last published Report of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, which contains the figures I have handed in.

167. You pin yourself to the proposition that these figures you have handed in are typical of the remarkable success of the creamery system?—Yes.

168. By Sir HORACE PARSONS.—Are the figures taken from creameries in one part of Ireland only, or from all over the country?—From the four provinces—

five from each province. The names of the creameries appear in the Return. They are as follows:—Ulster—Dunsmo, Braid, Ballymullard, Glenn, Omagh, Lombardstown, Ardfert, Cloonsagh, Berab, and Carrigoe. Leinster—Callan, Windsnap, Ballynaw, Inch, Kilmanow, Ashorey, and Drumcliffe. I had to take, of course, fairly old societies in order to get the ten years for the purpose of comparison.

169. What conclusion precisely do you expect this Committee to draw from these figures?—Well, it is perfectly certain that the farmers who form these societies are keeping more cows than they kept before. It is also clear, I think, that they are paying more attention to the milking qualities of the cows, though not nearly as much as we could wish. In these two ways the large increase in the turn-over is accounted for.

170. Mr. BOTT.—The creameries have taken the place of the old butter-making system. If the production was as great under the old system as under the creameries, these figures would not show that there has been an increase. Could you give us the figures showing the production under the old system?—I am afraid I have no such figures, because I don't think they exist.

171. The CHAIRMAN.—Can you give the figures showing the number of creameries in the four provinces that have ceased to exist?—Since when?

172. In the date you mentioned?—I have given two dates, 1908 and 1913.

173. Give us the number of creameries that have ceased to exist in that time?—I have not got the figures at hand.

174. Can you supply them?—Yes.*

175. Mr. McDONALD.—Do you mean to convey that it was your Organisation Society that made the better producers give up the old system for the new?—I think so.

176. Completely?—Completely is very sweeping, but the number of co-operative creameries is considerably in excess of all the other creameries taken together, and the number of farmers using the system is presumably greater also.

177. How do you account for people departing from the old system?—Because the new system paid them better than the old.

178. Sir HORACE PARSONS.—I have been engaged at organising a great many creameries myself, and the farmers used to tell me in the South of Ireland five and twenty years ago that under the creamery system they estimated that they made 50s. a cow per year more than under the old system. I cannot say whether it was an accurate calculation or not, but I would like to ask Mr. Anderson what his belief is?—It all depends, of course, on what the cow is capable of producing.

179. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Have you any means of forming an opinion as to the farmers giving up the rearing of good calves in consequence of the creameries?—I have heard a great deal about that, but I have no positive evidence to offer the Committee on the subject.

180. The CHAIRMAN.—Have you any knowledge that the farmers take into account the losses that arise in connection with creameries with which they are connected. For instance, ten farmers were made pay £100 in the Court of Appeal recently?—I think the facts are hardly as stated. It is true that judgment was entered against one farmer, not ten.

181. You know that that was a bad case. There are ten men involved. They corresponded with me. The judgment against one covers judgment against the others?—I dare say it would.

182. There is, therefore, no use in saying that it was only one man who was involved. These ten farmers who stupidly signed a promissory note have lost £100 each. In calculating the profits of creameries, would they not be entitled to take their losses into account?—Yes, in that particular creamery.

183. Sir HORACE PARSONS.—Is that case typical?—No, sir.

184. Would you say that the commercial losses in co-operative creameries are greater than in ordinary joint stock undertakings?—I would say that they are fractional compared with the magnitude of the trade, and that is admitted by everyone. The case referred to in Boyle is wholly exceptional. There was gross mismanagement, which was pointed out in our report. I can speak from experience of this case in Boyle. The creameries were dissolved. Of these, 28 were commercial failures. The remaining 48 never worked at all.

184. Would you say that a body of farmers, in considering whether it was wise to enter upon a co-operative creamery undertaking, ought to write off from the prospective profits a considerable sum to represent the risk of such a calamity as happened in the case of Boyle?—The prospect of all such societies is to build up a reserve fund as speedily as they can, and in order that that may be done, and that the society may be put in a sound financial position, the farmers voluntarily forego a certain proportion of the price which is calculated as being the value of their milk, and this deferred payment is carried forward until a sufficient reserve is established.

185. And is the reserve fund usually sufficient to meet risks?—I should say so. There was no reserve fund in this case, because they had lost it and their capital as well. There was, therefore, no means of meeting it.

186. But it was a wholly exceptional case as regards taking the experience of the movement as a whole?—I should say so.

187. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Is each creamery supposed to set on its own financial arrangements?—Yes.

188. So there is no co-operation between one creamery and another in the case of difficulty?—No. Well, I might qualify that by saying that in a recent case in which a creamery was concerned as defendant, four or five other creameries contributed small sums because they were interested in the matter, but there is no system of pooling.

189. The CHAIRMAN.—Creameries have auxiliaries?—Yes. Some are independent societies and some are branches.

190. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Do you lay down rules as to how the business of the society should be carried out?—We prescribe rules, but those differ in some cases, but there are certain fundamental principles that underlie all the rules. We do not order these societies to do anything. We have no authority over them. We can only advise them.

191. Mr. FIELD.—What constitutes membership?—The payment of a certain subscription.

192. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—And affiliation fee?—Yes.

193. Mr. FIELD.—I understand you have no mandatory power over these creamery societies?—We have not, but I ought to say that these societies voluntarily submit questions in dispute arising between them to our arbitration, and we very often act as arbitrators.

194. Have you had any serious complaint verbally or in writing in the direction of complaining or pointing out that owing to the feeding of calves on separated milk the animals became deteriorated in the creamery districts?—I have heard that statement over and over again, but it has never been put as a formal complaint to me or anyone connected with my Society. I have seen it stated repeatedly, but, on the other hand, you will get statements to the exact contrary.

195. Do your societies take any account whatever of the class of bull that is given to the cows, or do you leave that to the farmers themselves?—We cannot exercise any control.

196. Have you ever given any advice in that direction?—Yes, repeatedly.

197. And found it to use?—It has been useful in some cases, but sometimes the farmers think that any kind of bull is good enough, and they use any kind of bull. I know what your views are on the subject, and I entirely agree with them.

198. Mr. BAGWELL.—I understand that you are of opinion that the commercial losses in connection with the co-operative creameries are less than in the case of privately-owned creameries?—Yes, unquestionably.

199. The CHAIRMAN.—Sir Horace and privately managed businesses?—Yes.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I think my question was whether the losses in co-operative undertakings were greater than those in joint stock undertakings.

The CHAIRMAN.—The witness told us that he believed the losses on co-operative organisations were not more than on ordinary business transactions.

Mr. ANDERSON.—I think I said they were much less.

200. The CHAIRMAN.—The question was not as regards proprietary creameries, but ordinary business?—Yes.

201. Mr. BAGWELL.—I would like to put a question as to privately-managed creameries. Have you any figures about them?—No, but all I can say is that of all the 80 creameries owned by the Co-operative Wholesale Society in Ireland, not one is now working under

that body, and of the fifty odd owned by the Messrs. Lonsdale, not one is now working under that firm. The most of these—those that were in the least districts—have been transferred to the farmers, and are being run as co-operative societies. May I explain how I gave the answer in reply to Sir Horace a while ago as to the losses on co-operative creameries as compared with joint stock undertakings. I stick to that answer. We were challenged about six months ago, a good many years ago, and we took the trouble to look up the returns of the adjudicators in Bankruptcy as between joint stock companies and co-operative societies and it was perfectly amazing the small percentage of genuine co-operative undertakings that became commercial failures. It is quite possible for a society never to get to work at all—so be started and something to prevent it going on.

202. The CHAIRMAN.—I think your own Report shows that?—We don't hide the fact.

203. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Do you remember about twenty years ago a creamery that I myself organised, and that the walls were built up to about my height when the newspapers denounced it as Smith Barry's creamery and it was immediately abandoned?—I do.

204. Was not that typical of the kind of opposition that you have referred to?—Perhaps it was. I remember the case.

205. Smith Barry never had anything to do with it and never heard of it until he heard of it in this connection?—That is so.

206. Mr. M'DONALD.—I understood you to say that under the co-operative creamery system cows showed an improvement of 30/- a year more than under the old system?

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I was responsible for that statement, I said that when I was organising creameries I was frequently told by farmers that they estimated the increased money yield per cow per year as 30/- more.

Mr. M'DONALD.—I would like to know how much of the 30/- was used in making the separated milk cream to feed a calf?

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I would not venture to put any opinion against you on any such question, but if you ask me what I was told by farmers I will tell you.

The CHAIRMAN.—It is an old maxim that what you are told is not evidence.

207. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT (to the Witness).—You referred to the failure—I will not say the failure, but the abandonment of a large number of creameries that were owned by the Co-operative Wholesale Society. Will you explain what these creameries were?—They were branches of business started by the Co-operative Wholesale Society, which is the trade federation of the English industrial movement. They were desirous of supplying themselves with the best quality of produce and all that and they were induced to start quite a number of creameries here in Ireland. I think they actually invested about £125,000 capital in these creameries and they were run in the interests of the Co-operative Wholesale Society and not in the interests of the farmers. They gave the farmers no share in the management or in the profits nor did they provide any means whereby these men should ultimately become the owners of the creameries. They were quite honest in the transaction, and they said that in a number of cases where they started creameries that as a result of the advantages that these creameries would show to the farmers that they would become co-operators, and they expressed their willingness to meet us when the farmers were ready to take the creameries over. It was purely a business concern with the best intentions in the world behind it. Unfortunately the management of these creameries was not all that was to be desired, and they also had a system of lending money to the farmers which we thought very bad. In the early part of the year they followed the old example of the Cork butter merchants and gave loans on milk. Farmers when they wanted to get out of the liability borrowed money and it was actually refused. The C.W.S. said, "You are bound to supply us with milk until that debt is paid off and we will not take the money." This system became very bad. One man offered them the money and when they refused to take it, he challenged them to take him into court. They took the money instead. Owing to the reasons I have given these creameries did not succeed.

208. You have given your reasons for believing that creameries have had the effect of increasing the pro-

duction of one class of food?—Yes, sir. There is a portion of the question that you asked me a while ago about the increase of produce in the dairy districts that I am anxious to answer. We estimate that the average now gives somewhere about 450 gallons of milk in the year. It may be more or less. That is a liberal average estimate. We also hold that by a proper system of selection you can increase that yield to 600 gallons and yet have a good general purpose cow. That would mean that in the co-operative economies there would be a million sterling of an increased trade. We also believe that the economies have only effected a partial revolution in the dairy industry. They have revolutionised the system of making and marketing butter, but there is very little change in the method of producing milk. The great bulk of the milk is produced in three or four months of the summer and very little during any other season of the year. The result is that this country is placed at a disadvantage compared with countries like Denmark, which keeps up a level of production all the year round. We cannot take contracts for all the year round, so we think that while the economies have revolutionised the system of manufacture and marketing they have only done half what is necessary to be done. There must be a revolution in the production of milk if dairying is going to be made a really paying industry. In connection with that we have been told by farmers who have to buy a large quantity of artificial feeding that milk production on these farms does not pay, and we believe it. Therefore it is necessary to show the farmers that they can produce on the farm the kind of crop that he wants to produce milk.

219. I think you are now getting on to the village question, and perhaps you would say something about the agricultural co-operative societies, through which we tried to do our part at increasing village and general agriculture?—Yes. These societies came into existence about twenty years ago and they have done a very great service to agricultural production by showing the farmer how by a simple system of organisation they can obtain their fertilisers at wholesale prices. The Committee may be interested to know how this began. There was a group of small societies in the counties of Tipperary and Kilkenny, near Thurles, and these agricultural societies were of the most rudimentary description. There were about a hundred men in each society, and they had very little knowledge of business. They used to use a large quantity of artificial manures. They combined all their orders and advertised for tenders for the supply of these manures. At that time, as now, there was a strong trade combination amongst the manure manufacturers, but one firm anxious to do a large deal tendered for the business at prices which the farmers told me were from 25 to 40 per cent. below what they were in the habit of paying. They got these manures from Dublin by special train and they had their horses there to cart it away when the train arrived. They had an official sampler to take a sample for the purpose of analysis. I remember one thing that made a greater impression on the farmers even than the reduction in the price, and that was the fact that one lot was deficient in ammonia to the value of 12/6, and when this was pointed out to the contractor he sent a credit note for the value of the shortage in the ingredient. That incident impressed the farmers very much.

220. Was this one of the cases where the farmer was benefited, as we are told, at the expense of the trader and manufacturer?—Of course the local trader lost the business, and in so far as that was concerned he suffered, but the manufacturer did not suffer. On the contrary, the manufacturers admit that their profits and business turnover have increased. They are not free with the information, but they admit it. As regards the local distributor, of course he suffers a temporary disturbance of business, but we hope that if the farmer becomes more prosperous merely by the fact that he is able to buy these raw materials cheaper he will spend the extra money on his farm in the local town, and if the trader does not get it in one way he will in another, and traders throughout Ireland told me that they had opposed the farmers in this matter at first, but that they do so no longer. We have many instances where traders are members of the society and go in for all classes of things.

221. The Committee.—Has a trader ever complained in Parliament or out of it that he was subjected to fair competition?—To fair competition? I don't see why he should complain of being subjected to fair competition.

222. Is not that the whole case?—I maintain that this is fair competition.

223. So do I. I think that so far as co-operative societies deliberately start business no one has a right to complain, and if they do so one will defend them?—Since this little transaction of twenty years ago individual farmers who belong to co-operative societies obtain these articles at wholesale prices, but the benefit at these reduced prices is felt most in the poor districts. Co-operation has also the effect of giving an amount of information to the farmer which he did not possess before and teaches him to estimate for himself the value of the manure he is offered, and he can not be swindled in the price.

224. Mr. MORRISON.—In places where there was not a reasonable amount of competition between traders, formerly manures were supplied at a high price without a guarantee while now the traders have reduced their charges and give a guarantee?—That is so.

225. And they are doing a good business?—Yes. I should say that the fear of starting a co-operative society has a very wholesome effect in this case.

226. Mr. BAKER.—Before we pass away from the manure side of the question, is it a fact that the whole manufacture of chemical manure is a monopoly?—I am afraid it is.

227. If that is so how can it be urged that either the co-operative society or for that matter a combination of wealthy merchants can keep chemical manures down to their economic value?—Of course that is a matter for the Department, but I think that although there is this ring in existence and it is controlled by one firm, the prices charged are not exorbitant.

228. What means have you of knowing whether the prices are exorbitant or fair?—We have only got the unit values supplied to us by the Department, and if you take the guaranteed analysis of these manures and estimate the values by the unit, you will find that the prices charged are not excessive.

Mr. GOSNOL.—This is an arrangement that has been come to between the Department and the manure manufacturers.

Mr. BAKER.—You have no means so far as I know of forming a correct estimate as to whether the price charged is a commercial price such as you would get if there was no combination.

Mr. GOSNOL.—No, except comparison with prices charged in England and Scotland.

229. Mr. BAKER.—The same trouble as there. (To the Witness).—Has it not occurred to your Society that one of the finest works that could be done not only for Ireland but for Great Britain would be to make the supply of chemical manures a Government business?—It has not occurred to me.

230. Am I right in suggesting that even now at the reduced price it is still a most lucrative business for those engaged in it?—I am not so sure. We have taken a good deal of pains to get at the bottom of it and we have been favoured with the actual figures from one independent firm in east England, and as far as we can make out there is not a difference of 1/6 or 1/8 in superphosphates in the prices charged in Ireland and by this company. Then we also took steps to find what the prices were on the Continent and we found that in some cases small parcels of superphosphates were offered at 3/6 or 4/- less a ton than the price in Ireland. The quantity, however, was limited and the quality was not always very reliable. When we attempted to make purchases on the Continent, and the societies had actually combined to make some purchases, the trade here was so strong that they wrote to the Continental firm stating that they would dump a hundred times a larger quantity of stuff in their district if they executed the order, so it was not executed.

231. Is not that confirming what I am suggesting?—I don't see how your suggestion can be carried out at the present time. I will give you one reason why I think it would be difficult. I am informed that the rock phosphate in Carolina and North Africa is practically controlled by this combination.

232. That is a matter of common knowledge. Has your Society any record of the millionaires who made money out of these chemical manures?—No. We don't know many millionaires.

233. Mr. BAKER.—If it is the case that the private manure manufacturers make such a big profit has the Agricultural Organisation Society ever contemplated making manure of their own?—Yes, but we

tended that it was practically impossible. The opposition of the manure trade would crush any attempt of that kind. In order to start a concern of that kind with any hope of success you would have to bind farmers not only to take shares but also to undertake to take a certain supply of the manures under penalty. The moment you started the manufacturers would pull down the prices.

224. Sir HORACE PARKER.—Just to avoid a misunderstanding, I think Mr. Bagwell asked you whether the Organisation Society had contemplated manufacturing manures of their own?—Oh, no. The Organisation Society does not engage in business of any kind except teaching co-operation.

225. Mr. BAGWELL.—Have any of the societies associated with the Organisation Society ever contemplated the manufacture of manure?—Yes, and in some cases what they have done with very beneficial results is they have bought raw materials for making a certain compound manure and they have compounded them according to the formulae prescribed by the Department and they have got very good results. They got them in many cases at a ton cheaper than they would have to pay for the compound manure bought from the trader.

226. Mr. FLEMING.—Would you put that forward as an instance of the ability of co-operative societies?—Intelligent co-operation I would call it.

227. Mr. BORN.—Did you find that the farmers on the Continent paid less for phosphatic manures and succinea than the farmers here?—We found that the difference in price was somewhere about 8/- or 4/- a ton.

228. Mr. GONNOR.—You are talking now of phosphatic manures?—It was never contemplated to import the others.

229. Mr. BORN.—What I want to get at is that it would be evidence that this country was paying too much for its manures?—I am not sure. They have certain advantages on the Continent. There are a number of small manufacturers of phosphatic acid, and it is used as a sort of by-product. They can make the manures more economically. Some Irish works make their own acid, but not all.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—The German co-operative societies long ago felt the same grievance about the monopoly of the manure manufacturer. Of course we cannot go now into Mr. Barrie's suggestion that the Government should make manures for us, but Mr. Bagwell's suggestion is why did not the Organisation Society or some of the societies affiliated to it make their own manures. I think it right to mention that the same serious trouble that the Raiffeisen Association got into was when they tried to manufacture their own manures. Eight or ten years ago they got into serious financial trouble owing to having taken responsibility with regard to a co-operative society for the manufacture of manures. Apparently the "ring" or whatever it was, was too much for them. The one misfortune they had was due to an attempt to manufacture manures.

230. Sir HORACE PARKER (to the witnesses).—Perhaps you would tell us now very briefly what has been attempted by your movement in regard to poultry and eggs?—A few societies have been started for the purpose of purchasing the eggs by weight from their members, and also purchasing poultry. Only two or three societies are engaged at all in an extensive way in the poultry business. They are doing it very well indeed, but a considerable number of societies other than the specially organised poultry societies are doing the egg business. The plan they adopt is—they get people to take shares and they have the eggs brought to a convenient place to be packed. They pay for the eggs by weight. They test them for freshness. They grade them for size and pack them according to the requirements of the markets. At first we had a Deane to give instruction in egg packing, and it has been carried on very much on his lines. There are some depots that do not do the packing as well as others. Taken on the whole, the plan adopted has had a good effect on the local egg trade because the local trader has gone in for packing and grading. The eggs are better than they were. Formerly they were packed in cases that were returnable. They were packed in straw often under the rain and the straw got wet and ruined the contents.

Mr. FIELD.—We had evidence yesterday that the co-operative societies were sending eggs in very inferior cases, resulting in a very large number of breakages.

The CHAIRMAN.—I don't think that is so. I put a question* to Mr. Sidney Smith whether the co-operative packing was any better than the packing by the general dealer. I was comparing the two.

Mr. FIELD.—There is a question asked in the House today on that very question.

231. The CHAIRMAN.—It was elicited in evidence yesterday in answer to a question of mine that in all too many cases the co-operative packing was no better than the ordinary. That statement was made by our agent in England, Mr. Sidney Smith—I am sure he knows. Of course, while there has been a great improvement, none of us maintain that any of the societies do things as well as they ought to do them.

232. Sir HORACE PARKER.—Is not there this advantage in the case of the Co-operative Society, that they do the packing themselves instead of having it done by a middleman?—Yes.

233. There is a distinct money gain in that?—Yes.

234. You said the co-operative societies sold eggs by weight. I asked Mr. Sidney Smith yesterday if they did so, and I think he said so?—I must disagree with him. I know of one case where a society in Athlone that used to buy by weight and that has returned to the old system, but that is the only case I know of.

235. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Are you of opinion that having by weight is the only fair way?—Yes.

236. Mr. BAGWELL.—Can you give us any idea of the extent to which selling by weight obtains?—They are always bought by weight by the societies from their members and the eggs are graded and classified.

237. The CHAIRMAN.—How many societies have you in Ireland doing this business?—Do you mean the egg business?

238. Yes?—And doing nothing else?

239. Yes?—Very few. I can explain why that is so.

240. That is not the question at all. Mr. Bagwell asked you as to the extent of this selling of eggs by weight?—Yes.

241. Sir HORACE PARKER.—Is not there a good deal of co-operative selling of eggs by creameries?—There is a great deal.

242. A great deal more than by exclusively egg and poultry societies?—Yes.

243. The CHAIRMAN.—The question I want to find out is this—you were asked by Mr. Bagwell if you could give an opinion as to the extent of the sale of eggs by weight. I then asked you how many societies were engaged in this egg trade upon which you would form your opinion, and you said very few?—Yes.

244. You cannot give an opinion as to the general practice at all. You are only concerned with your Society?—Yes.

245. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—A large number of creameries you told us deal in eggs. Can you give us an idea of how many co-operative societies altogether trade in eggs?—I cannot say very definitely, but I believe somewhere about 50 outside the special egg societies, of which there are 18.

246. Mr. BAGWELL.—Are these eggs principally sold by weight?—Yes. We don't advocate the business on any other basis.

247. Mr. BORN.—Are not all eggs sold by weight no matter who sells them? How else could they be sold? They are sold in cases and there is a certain number in each case. The man who sells them has to guarantee that the eggs are 15 lbs. or 16 lbs. to the hundred?—I am certain that eggs that are not graded are sold by the number and not by weight.

248. The number in the case?—Yes.

249. The number in the case is a fixed number?—It is not. There are cases and cases. I don't know whether your question refers to ungraded or unclassified eggs.

250. It does not matter. It refers to all eggs?—It matters to me in answering.

251. Every man who exports eggs is bound to grade them?—He does not.

252. He cannot sell them unless he tells the size of his egg?

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—But he does.

Mr. BAGWELL.—I know nothing about eggs except that they are good to eat—sometimes—but I am concerned with the carriage of eggs, and we convey large numbers of ungraded eggs to the other side that are sold by numbers.

Mr. BARNES.—Is it not so that Mr. Boyd is right to this extent—that if eggs are shipped and graded the

* See questions 124-5.

seller has to give a guarantee of a certain average weight otherwise they will be unsaleable?

Mr. BACWELL.—I don't know enough about the custom of the trade to answer that. All I know is that eggs are sold by count.

253. Mr. COOMES (to Witness).—With regard to the eggs purchased by co-operative societies or creameries, is it not the case that they are sold by weight?—Yes.

254. Do the co-operative societies purchase by weight or numbers?—By weight. I know of only one case where they departed from that custom, but I know of no other.

255. Sir RONALD PHILLIPS.—Bearing the terms of the Reference in mind is there anything you wish to say about the work of the L.A.O.S. in the matter of credit and insurance?—Credit is absolutely important to the small farmer if he wants capital to purchase stock and seeds and manures to the best advantage, and to that extent these little societies are very useful to him. In regard to insurance, the Organisation Society has helped the farmers materially in getting special terms for them under the Workmen's Compensation Acts. The terms are infinitely better than any terms that can be got outside the Society. It has also got special rates for insurance on fire risks in connection with creameries and dairies, but what is more important, it has lately been able to take out floating policies designed to protect the creameries and other societies which are exporting produce during war time. It insures against war and ordinary marine risks. At the present time the rate is 10s. per cent., which covers everything. Some societies send meat, some send eggs, and nearly all the creameries send butter to the other side, so it is important that they should get this measure of protection. We do it through Lloyd's. They told us that they could not do it for all and sundry, that it would have to be organised before they could give any exceptional rates.

256. I think at this point I ought to ask you whether there are any general remarks you wish to make upon the effect of the movement in increasing food production in Ireland?—I don't know how far the Committee would stand if I began to generalise.

257. The CHAIRMAN.—I will stand anything that is relevant?—From my own personal observation, which extends to 25 years, I am convinced that the one way to get people in this country to move forward is to associate themselves together for some business purpose to make it worth their while to come together regularly to discuss common problems and take counsel as to how they may solve them, and I find that in districts which I have given up almost as hopeless to start a society, that when we do start it the people become as progressive as they were the reverse before. We are an imitative people, and when the leaders of progress in a district become the leaders of progress in a society the other members of the society follow them. By degrees you have the example of these more enlightened men becoming the practice of the whole community. Then the farmer feels rather a poor worm by himself. He has not got much to say in the business of the country, but when he gets together in a society he begins to think something of himself. When you have this movement with its hundred thousand members and over a thousand societies the individuals not only feel that they acquire strength by associating themselves with their neighbour but all the societies feel great strength in the whole movement as one thing in the country. Of course, it has been the fashion to say that this movement did not amount to much and cannot do much good. I dare say there are districts where co-operation can do little for the farmers, but in the poorest district co-operation has done a great deal. I don't think that if we were all to go and preach increased production to the unorganised farmer that we would have much effect, but if we got them into an association that would get manures, implements and machinery at a reduced rate and which would provide them with an economic system of marketing then I think we would have some hope. The officers of the Department will agree that where you organise people they are much more receptive of information and more ready to carry out instructions. It is a hopeless task to get at the unorganised man throughout the country, but if you get them together they are in a more receptive condition and put their instruction into practice. I heard a lot lately about farmers requiring inducements to increase production. The inducement is there if they would only combine to make use of the methods that have

been made use of successfully in every country, but to imagine—I cannot tell what the intentions of Parliament are—but to imagine at this moment of financial strain that large sums are to be given to farmers to increase their production is a most amazing proposition and I don't think that as long as this system of caring of making the people help themselves is there and ready to hand that any other plan ought to be tried in the way of bounties. I feel strongly on that question, and I dare say I may have spoken strongly.

258. The CHAIRMAN.—Before you pass from that will you take the present crisis from your mind?—I do.

259. The Government are proposing or may propose that people should break up their lands and grow wheat?—Yes.

260. Is not the farmer entitled to say to the Government, "you are asking us to do a thing that may result in grievous loss to us. The Deadweight may be open." What right has the Government to ask farmers to undertake a risk like that without some inducement which you foresees?—The State has the same right to ask the farmer to make sacrifices as the soldier to join the Army.

261. I deny that, but I have got your answer.

Mr. DEWANE.—Supposing the farmers will not do it. 262. The Most Rev. Dr. KEALE.—As far as I caught your answer it is that the Government has the same right to compel the farmer to use his land in a particular way as to call upon the soldiers to fight?—What I think my answer was, was that the Government had a right to expect as much from the farmer as from the man who became a soldier. Voluntary service is what the soldiers are giving.

263. Mr. DEWANE.—Suppose a number of business men who profess to understand agricultural conditions think that the Government in order to meet a war emergency ought to establish say a minimum price for wheat do you say that these men are wrong if they suggest that, believing that it was the only course that would lead to an increase in the food production?—If that body of men believe that that was the only course which would lead to an increased food production they would be bound to recommend it, but I cannot believe that any body of men would come to that conclusion—if sensible men.

264. Supposing that people who claimed that they understood the conditions of life in Ireland and the reasons that operate on the farmers' minds came to the conclusion after a good deal of consideration that that is the right course to pursue, would they be right in recommending it?—I would say not.

265. Why?—Because I don't agree with these premises at all.

266. Supposing in their opinion there was no other course to adopt?—I have answered that question—if they came to that conclusion they were bound to recommend it.

267. Would they be wrong in your opinion?—Yes.

268. The CHAIRMAN.—I want to ask you this—You know where I draw the line on co-operation?—Yes.

269. I was brought up in a school which taught me that if I wanted to do anything I had better do it myself. I was brought up in the strictest school of individualism and individual effort and taught that if I could not do for myself that I was too good for this world and I had better go. Do you think that the function of individualism has been done out of this country?—I don't know why I should be asked this question, because the whole work that I have devoted myself to is in order that farmers may succeed by the spirit of self-help.

270. Do you think the function of individualism has gone clean out of the land?—I wish there was more individual effort in Ireland.

271. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—The Government of the country think that during the continuance of the war increased production of wheat or oats may be required, and it is the experience of the farmers here that the growing of wheat did not pay, and they fear that if they increase their area under wheat there might be a sudden collapse in the price. Under these circumstances would the farmers be right in requiring some guarantee, before they embark on increased tillage, that they would not suffer a loss?—I have not yet learned that the growing of wheat and oats do not pay. When I am convinced of that I may agree with you.

272. The CHAIRMAN.—I put to you a question—that if the Government increase the growth of wheat or oats do you think they would be entitled to call for

that effort on the part of the farmer of the farmer were not guaranteed against loss? If the farmer is in a position to turn round to the Government and say, "I am perfectly willing to back up more land and grow wheat, but supposing the Dardanelles were open and the Russian supply is available and the price of wheat comes tumbling about my ears am I not entitled to ask some guarantee against loss?" Is not the farmer entitled to say to the Government you have no right to ask a special class to till at a loss for the whole country?—I must come back to the answer I gave earlier—If the attempts to increase the food supply are to be limited to one year or a short period you will not get the farmers to move. I am astonished to hear that it is even hinted that the growing of wheat or corn is not profitable.

273. I must stop this. I will correct that statement. The Department has never said that the growing of wheat or corn will not pay. This Committee has not said at either, but is this Committee looking as they are bound to do, in a period of danger that may be ahead of us owing to an extension of the submarine difficulty, entitled in view of that difficulty, which the farmers have not brought about, to ask them to back up their land and run the risk of a great loss if there is a fall in prices?

Mr. MURPHY.—May I interpose. Much time has been spent in addressing this question to Mr. Anderson. His evidence is that a great deal can be done for increasing production by means of the co-operative arrangement that he represents. If we asked Mr. Anderson, who is here for the special purpose of explaining the function of co-operation, as to whether we should recommend a fixed price it seems to me to be outside the scope of his evidence.

274. The CHAIRMAN.—I never asked him that question. I have clarified from Mr. Anderson that he does not think there are any circumstances that would warrant the Government in raising the price of corn?—That is putting an answer that I did not give.

275. I shall take your answers. They go on record.

276. Mr. BORN.—I want you, Mr. Anderson, to put yourself in the place of an Irish farmer. If the Government asked the farmer to increase his supply of wheat and the same thing occurs in England and Scotland and foreign supplies cease in, would it not be reasonable that he should require a guarantee that if prices fall considerably that he would not at least suffer any monetary loss from the exercise of his skill and labour and capital in increasing his tillage?—I don't see why the farmer should be singled out for a bonus and secured at the expense of the whole community.

The CHAIRMAN.—That is a complete answer.

Mr. BORN.—The farmer is the only man who is asked to do anything.

Mr. MURPHY.—And the only man who is making money out of the war.

277. Mr. BARNES.—You have heard a suggestion, Mr. Anderson, as to the possible recommendation of this Committee. Has it occurred to you that if the Dardanelles were open and the normal supply of food came to this country, that a fall in prices is so likely to be expected that it would have a deterrent effect on the Irish farmer?—If the Dardanelles were forced and supplies were to come in from Russia that the price of grain would fall to normal price and perhaps below?

278. I want you to keep close to the point. Say you are a farmer yourself, or that I was a farmer. We are weighing up the prospect of the coming year, and under the circumstances I have mentioned would we not say that the safe course is to grow less next year?—It seems to me to be a very important matter to know whether the farmer is going to calculate on a war price or selling at peace prices. No one can guarantee him a war price. If the prices become normal we will benefit by it and if the farmers do not reap the full advantage they will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they did their duty.

279. Mr. FURN.—Is it your opinion that the co-operative society is sufficient in itself to meet this emergency?—Oh, no. I would not be such a fool as to make a suggestion of that kind. I say that the co-operative movement can be very useful at this juncture, but it cannot do everything.

280. Mr. HOBAN FLEMING.—Supposing that Parliament or the Government decided that in view of the perils of the present situation the Irish farmers ought to take a certain definite course which is not their normal course, would it not be quite legitimate

for the Irish farmers or their representatives, Mr. Russell and myself—to be representing the Department and I the Organisation Society—to say to the Government, "We will do our utmost to get the farmers to take your advice, but if your advice involves them in a business loss we think you ought to give them some guarantee against that." Under those circumstances would you object to give the farmers a guarantee against loss from following the advice of the Government?—I would not object to any kind of reasonable insurance.

281. The CHAIRMAN.—That is the whole issue.* 282. Mr. HOBAN FLEMING.—One would assume from the Chairman's questions to you just now that he considers individualism and co-operation to be antithetical. We, on the other hand, hold that co-operation and individualism are not antithetical but that proper co-operation develops individualism. Is not that our theory?—That is what I always believed.

283. You have written a letter to this Committee which was agreed to after a long discussion at our meeting on Tuesday. In this letter you gave it as the opinion of our Society that if they could co-operate at this crisis with the Department that a very great improvement in the agricultural condition of the country might be rapidly effected. That I take it is your opinion?—Certainly.

284. I would like to ask you this question. I don't want to raise any controversial matter at all; in fact I trust that the answer of my witnesses from the Organisation Society will be in the spirit of the letter with which I hope no fault will be found. Have you any practical suggestion for bringing about a better understanding between the Society and the Department during this crisis?—Yes. I felt very strongly for a long time, and I think I mentioned it to you and to certain other members of our Committee that it amounted, I will say for ourselves, to a public scandal that two bodies which are concerned with the production of this country should not be working together at this crisis and that I thought we ought to take steps to remove this reproach from us. I suggested to you that at ought to be possible now, whatever may have been our misunderstanding and differences in the past, to have a small body of sensible men composed of representatives of the Department and ourselves—and possibly also representatives of the Composed Districts Board and the Estates Commissioners, who are concerned in our work—to meet together periodically and discuss matters out of which controversy is likely to arise, and to prevent such controversy and overlapping and see whether it would not be possible for us to work together, and so far as the Organisation Society is concerned, both in regard to its Committee and its staff and the members of the Society, they are all looking forward to something of that kind. We believe that the co-operation of the two bodies would have a very large and beneficial result.

285. How far do you think the Irish farmers are amenable to co-operative organisation compared with farmers in other parts of the English-speaking world, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Colonies?—I say that the Irish farmer appears to possess a great aptitude for combination. He has got the capacity for combination very strongly developed. He has got a lot to learn in the co-operative movement, but on the whole he makes a good enough co-operator. I think that I can say that you get the best co-operation in the poorest districts, where the people need it and men are accustomed to help each other out of their difficulties and troubles. One thing that lent us strength for this co-operative movement long before the Organisation Society went down to them was that people had a kind of primitive co-operation among themselves. A cow died and the lot went round. Instead of being weakened by the co-operative societies this spirit was strengthened. I think we began our work in the South of Ireland, and it was very difficult to work there. There were all kinds of difficulties opposed to us. We had to fight against apathy and suspicion. The people did not trust us, and they did not trust each other. They did not believe what we said, and we had no concrete example to point to in this country. We had to point to Denmark, about which we did not know very much ourselves. We found it very hard to convince them and to take our advice, but when we succeeded in getting the co-operative idea into their heads it was almost as hard to get it out.

* See note at end of Witness's evidence.

This movement began in the South of Ireland, and it was not for some years that it took root in the North.

283. It is not so difficult now to promote co-operation as it was in the early days to which I have referred?—No, nothing at all like it. The dairying problem was very difficult. When we started in 1899 there was an system of inspection of dairying in Ireland except to a limited extent in Glamorgan, and there were few well equipped creameries. I went to Sweden and had to come back pretending I was an expert. Of course I was not an expert, but I had more knowledge than other people. I told them where I got my information and where they could verify it. Of course there was trade opposition. It took all kinds of shapes. This trade opposition was not political, but it sheltered itself under the guise of politics. There were newspaper criticisms galore, and the names we were called: Sir Horace was called "the belshazzar monster" and I was called "his man Friday." Those things passed away and the people began to recognise the importance of co-operation, and it is not so difficult to organise now. The problems of tillage is infinitely easier than organising dairying.

287. Would you say this, that so far as the Organisation Society is concerned, they believe with the Department's instructors and the Department's experts giving them all the assistance they could, supposing they are working together it would enable them to increase the utility of their own work?—Yes, because, of course, it is not our function to give that kind of instruction. Our function is to start co-operative agricultural societies and to obtain such instruction as we can from the recognised body for the purpose.

288. Do you wish to say anything about co-operation and transit, by which I mean co-operation as a means of bulkings, regularising, and sending uniform consignments of produce so that they can be carried more cheaply and imported more expeditiously?—It is conceded on all hands that if you have a regular bulk at stated places and times and packed suitably for convenience that that organised traffic will be entitled to better terms than a whole lot of heterogeneous consignments from a number of unorganised people. We have not very much experience of other produce than butter and eggs. The marketing of farming produce generally is invariably left to the very last to be solved because it is the hardest of all.

289. Mr. Macdonagh.—You have studied the Continental movement to some extent?—Yes.

290. Is it not the case that the Government in Germany and Austria and the conservative element in Belgium and Holland—the Catholic clergy—look upon this co-operative movement as the best antidote and bulwark that could possibly be established to prevent the spread of socialism and collectivism and such movements as tend to destroy individualism and individual effort?—That is so.

291. The CHAIRMAN.—The only suggestion I have taken from your evidence is this—You proposed that the Department, the Land Commission, the I.A.O.S., and the Congested Districts Board should meet occasionally and consult. Well, I have no objection to meet anyone, but I wish to recall to you an effort of mine to bring you into consultation with the Department—very largely at your own request I think. I appointed an Advisory Committee connected with latter. I lost my Bill owing to that Advisory Committee. It would have been law but for it now?—The Committee met once, I think.

292. They met more than once and so amended the Bill that it could not be passed. That was the last occasion on which I had co-operation with other

bodies?—I think the Committee was not composed entirely of co-operatives.

293. I may say it was. That is the one idea I have taken out of your evidence.

Mr. BURNIE.—I think we ought to make it clear that Mr. Anderson was not brought here to defend co-operation in any sense. We have no right to attack it in any form, but you have been invited to give us helpful suggestions. It was only in that sense that we have invited the co-operation of your Society. Well, I thoroughly approve of the suggestion that there might be a little more co-operation between the Co-operative Society and the Department. We have not, I confess, received the practical help that I looked forward to. I hope that we may get it from other witnesses I would like to get more practical suggestions than we have yet received.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I would like to say that the Committee of the Society have handed in a statement. (See Report of the Committee, Cf. 8646). Mr. Anderson's evidence was only given in support of that statement. He was not instructed to advise the Committee but to answer any question they chose to ask him, and I think they have used their privilege quite freely.

Subsequently the following letter was read by the Secretary from the Witness:—

IRISH AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION SOCIETY.

THE PATRICK HOUSE,

84 MINOR SQUARE,

DUBLIN, 22nd July, 1915.

SIR.—I desire to call attention to a very important—I may say, vital—question in my evidence, for which I am not responsible, and to correct at while the incident is fresh in my memory.

Towards the close of my examination to-day Sir Horace Plunkett asked a question to the following effect:—

Whether I would object to a proposal to indemnify farmers who, in response to the call of the Government, had increased their area of tillage under wheat, and had suffered a commercial loss thereby. I began my answer by stating that I had no objection to a system of insurance. Here the Chairman interposed* with a remark to the effect that I had at last given the answer which the Committee had been waiting for. I asked to be permitted to complete my answer, but was not allowed to do so.

I must protest against this partial answer being recorded in the Minutes as my opinion. What I was going on to say was that any system of insurance to be equitable must, under such circumstances, be borne equally by the farmer and the State—a most important qualification in view of the tenor of the whole evidence given by me. I would further have pointed out to the Committee, had I been permitted to do so, that while I might agree to the principle of insurance, I failed to see how it could be practicable to ascertain whether such losses had actually been incurred without a minute and expensive investigation of the circumstances in each case.

I will ask you to be good enough to read this letter to the Committee at their sitting this afternoon.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R. A. ANDERSON.

The Secretary.

Committee on Food Production.

Royal College of Science.

Dublin.

* See Question 281.

Mr. THOMAS J. CROWE, Member, Athenry, examined.

294. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Where do you live, Mr. Crowe?—Mentree, Co. Galway.

295. What is your occupation?—I am a farmer. I farm about 60 Irish acres in two holdings.

296. How long have you been a farmer?—All my life, but I have been in possession only for eight years.

297. You are a member of the I.A.O.S. Committee?—Yes, since July, 1914, when I was co-opted in place of a member who died.

298. You are also a member of the Manlough Co-operative Society?—Yes, and a member of the Manlough Co-operative Agricultural Society.

299. The CHAIRMAN.—When was that formed?—In 1898.

300. What was it formed as?—A Co-operative Agricultural Society.

301. Not as a dairy society?—No.

302. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I think that as a practical farmer the Committee would be glad to hear your

views as to wheat growing in your district and also as to oat growing and continuous cropping. Take wheat first—I went into this question of wheat growing. I got the return made by the Department. I compared wheat growing and oat growing as to which would be the more profitable. I came to the conclusion that the net profit per acre from oats and wheat would be practically the same. I don't think you will be able to get the farmers to discontinue growing oats if they only make the same profit out of wheat.

301. Do you think that the farmers in your district could be induced to increase substantially their oat crop?—The increase in the oat crop and the increase in tillage generally is determined by a number of factors—almost entirely by the labour difficulty.

302. The labour difficulty, you say, is the chief factor?—It is almost the determining factor. It may be easy enough to get down a crop, but if a man is going to put down ten acres of wheat or oats, how is he going to reap it?

303. Would you tell us on your own farm to what extent you have increased your tillage?—Eight years ago I had only one acre of tillage, and I increased it year after year until now I have six acres.

304. Do you say that the main difficulty in increasing tillage is the question of labour?—I say that it is almost the determining factor.

305. Do you say that a change in the prevailing system of cultivation would to some extent get over the labour difficulty?—The only change that will get over it is the employment of labour-saving implements and the instruction of the people in the use of them.

306. Would you give us your own experience in the use of implements?—When I took up the farm I found I could not carry on any tillage on the old system. Little by little I got implements and increased the amount of tillage.

307. Where did you get these implements?—I bought some from local traders, some from the local society, and some from traders in Dublin. I have, of course, now the use of the implements bought by the Menagh Co-operative Society. They started an implement branch a year and a half ago.

308. Mr. O'NEILL.—How does it work?—Remarkably well.

309. What system is followed?—The Society owns the implements and lends them out to the farmers at a reasonable rate.

310. On hire?—Yes.

311. How is the question of priority determined as to who would have the first call?—It has not arisen in our society. I am on the Committee, and it has never arisen.

312. Mr. O'CONNOR.—First come first served?—Yes.

313. Mr. DOWNES.—What class of machinery do you refer to?—An oil engine and a threshor.

314. What about ploughs?—The Society does not hire out ploughs. The farmers buy their own ploughs.

315. That is supplied by the individual effort of the farmers?—Yes.

316. The CHAIRMAN.—Has there been no machinery selling these implements to farmers?—There has been. The Department certainly has been giving loans.

317. I asked you was not there an organisation for the purpose of helping farmers to buy ploughs and machinery?—Yes.

318. You mentioned some machine?—Yes, a threshor.

319. What did it cost?—£150.

320. Where did you get that money?—From the Department.

321. You have a co-operative society supplying these implements and you get a loan from the Department?—Yes.

That is all I want to know.

322. Mr. GORMAN.—What other implements beside the oil engine and the threshor have been purchased by the Society?—There is an oil engine and a threshor and spring tooth harrows. There is also a grinder, but it is not lent out. The farmers bring their stuff to it.

323. It was only a year and a half ago that the Society took up the implement branch?—Yes.

324. Mr. HENRY PLUNKETT.—They were supplying their members with seeds and manures before that?—Yes.

325. Mr. GORMAN.—But during the last year and a half they have been hiring out implements?—Yes.

326. Are you aware that the Department have been

granting loans for four years for the purchase of implements?—Yes.

327. Would you be surprised to learn that in that district of Menagh the Department have granted loans amounting to over £300 for implements during the past three years?—I would not be surprised. The area over which the Department is operating is not confined to the Menagh district. It is over a wider area.

I am only taking the area of the Menagh district. These loans have been granted in that district.

The CHAIRMAN.—If you go over the wider district, £1,500 have been spent, and the Co-operative Society was started in a district where this work was actually going on?

328. Mr. HENRY PLUNKETT.—Would it not be true to say that the Department's Scheme was started in a district where a Co-operative Society had been in existence purchasing agricultural requirements, but not implements, for many years?—Yes.

329. There is a little confusion between the "Menagh district" and the district from which the members of the Menagh Society come from?—They come from a radius of about four miles.

330. And the Department's district would cover a very much larger area?—I understand it does.

331. It is not the same. I want you to give your opinion as to which is the better way for farmers who cannot afford to own implements individually to acquire them—in it better to acquire them on the co-operative system or merely to club together with no particular organisation and borrow from the Department or someone else who will lend?—I think it is better to run these co-operatively because in that way they can acquire implements that they could not acquire individually.

332. I have in mind this case—the Department go down to a district and say to 20 men that they ought to have an implement between them and that they can lend the money to these 20 men for the purchase of one or more implements. Now would it be better as the area covered by the Menagh Society for these 20 men to buy this implement through the Society or better to buy it independently from the Department. In both cases the Department lends its help. Do you consider that there is an advantage in the Co-operative Society being used as the channel for purchasing the machinery?—I am afraid I don't quite understand the question. If they purchased through the Society they would get the implement cheaper.

333. I am assuming that in both cases the terms would be the same, but what I had in mind is, that the advantage of buying through the Co-operative Society is that they not only get the implements but you make the necessary arrangements for hiring them out and taking care of them far better than if you lend them in the control of a small group of men?—I think that it is better that the Co-operative Society should own the implements and hire them out to their members.

334. Mr. O'CONNOR.—What do you mean by hiring, and how is the amount arrived at?—It is fixed by the committee of the society.

335. Supposing I got the loan of a mowing machine for the day, what would the amount of the hiring be?—The Menagh Society have no mowing machine for hire.

336. What do you hire?—We hire out spring tooth harrows for 6d. a day.

337. To whom is that money paid?—To the Secretary of the Society.

338. Is there any official to take time and see that it is returned in good order?—The Secretary sees to that.

339. Supposing the harrow was broken by accident, what occurs then?—That question has never arisen.

340. The CHAIRMAN.—The Department lends money to a single individual and he is responsible for the money, and let me say parenthetically that there is no question of arrears in the Menagh district. The loans have been well paid. The Department lends to an individual, and he is responsible. There is nothing to prevent that individual lending out his machinery. In fact loans are made on that understanding. The Department lend their instructors free of charge to enable these people to acquire a knowledge of using the machinery?—That is so.

341. That is one advantage that a Co-operative Society has not got. I am not saying that you ought not to have a co-operative society?—No.

344. A co-operative society buys a machine for common use. Don't you think that there is likely to be a question of precedence. Take the waster. It is not better in Menlough than anywhere else?—It is generally worse.

345. You take the machine as being on the spot. There are half a dozen or a dozen men in the Society who are entitled to the use of it. Is there not then a difficulty as to who comes first?—Yes, but it has not arisen in our Society.

346. In connection with the thrasher, the main machine, the Department lent the money for that?—Yes.

347. Mr. GOMES.—With regard to co-operative societies purchasing implements, would you recommend that they should purchase all the implements and work them co-operatively, or would you confine them to implements such as threshers; and the small implements such as ploughs and harrows, should be purchased by the individuals; or would you recommend that the co-operative society would purchase all kinds of implements?—I would recommend that they would buy small implements where the farms are very small and it might not be economic for a small farmer to buy a wheel plough.

348. The CHAIRMAN.—Have you any difficulty with the local trader?—They often overcharge us.

349. Mr. O'NEILL.—Does the co-operative society help or assist in the sale of your farm produce?—No, not yet.

350. Has it assisted any of its members in that respect?—No.

351. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Has your society taught its members how to use these costly and intricate machines?—Yes. They got instruction from the Organiser of the I.A.O.S., and an officer of the Department.

352. The CHAIRMAN.—Who was that?—Mr. Fitzgerald.

353. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—You heard the Chairman say that the advantage of individual loans over co-operative purchase was that in the former case the Department sent an instructor to teach the farmer how to use the implement, but that they gave no such assistance to the co-operative society. Now, would your members consider that was fair treatment on the part of the Department—would they feel it a grievance that the Department withheld the services of an instructor?—

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Crowe gave me a perfectly clear answer. I said that the Department gave loans for the purchase of these implements to individuals—that they purchased them from the local trader provided that they were of the proper description and not over-charging, and that in addition the instructor was on the spot, moving about the neighbourhood, and gave instruction to these people as to how these implements were to be used. These people knew nothing about the implements before. These are people in Menlough who do not know how to use a plough?—Yes, wheel ploughs, even though the Department's instructor was there.

354. The instructor is there for the purpose?—Yes.

355. That is an advantage of the Department scheme. Would I be right in saying that 96 per cent.—I am quoting from a return dealing with the past four or five years—of the agricultural implements purchased by small farmers in the Menlough district have been purchased through the medium of our agricultural instructors?—I have no means of verifying that, but we have no reason to say that it is not accurate.

356. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Would it be true as regards the members of your own society?—Yes, such as the purchase of small implements.

357. I take it that it is your view that farmers should co-operate to buy the larger implements?—Yes.

358. The CHAIRMAN.—Have you any reason to say that an instructor would refuse instruction to an individual because he is a co-operative?—No. The belief is that the agricultural instructor would not give it collectively to the society. The belief prevails that the instructor is hostile to the Co-operative Society.

359. Mr. DOWNES.—You have the advantage of the assistance of both the Department and the Organisation Society in your district, and the result has been that you have got a supply of farm implements within the last two years. Whether that came from one body or another or from both, what has been the effect on farming in your district during the periods of these

loans or did you have secured?—There has been an appreciable increase in tillage, and what tillage there is is much better than what was before.

360. Do you believe that if implements were supplied in other districts in Galway, no matter from what source the implements came, would it be the means of increasing tillage in your county?—It would certainly increase tillage.

361. Would there be an increase in the tillage in the county in the coming year to any appreciable extent?—Yes, if the farmers had a will to increase it. You have the human factor to take into consideration in all this.

362. Of course we have, but from your knowledge of farmers, if they had the same conditions in every district as you have in yours, do you think that they would largely increase their tillage?—I believe so.

363. The CHAIRMAN.—Have you heard down in Moville that the Department had stopped three loans?—I heard it, but I don't know whether they have renewed them or not.

364. Did you read it in the newspapers?—No.

365. You did not see a letter in the newspapers stating that the Department had stopped these loans and that the Co-operative Society held the field?—No.

366. You heard that the Department had stopped the loans?—Yes.

367. Take it from me that the Congested Districts are exempted from that rule.

368. Mr. O'NEILL.—Have you any experience of growing catch crops?—Only experimentally.

369. Has that been followed by any other farmers in your district?—No. There was some catch cropping done by the Department.

370. Is that a promising development?—I think it is, but it is too soon to pronounce judgment.

371. The CHAIRMAN.—You said the Department's inspectors had been busy at catch cropping?—Yes. I saw a good many plots, and they were carried out under the direction of the Department's overseers.

372. Mr. O'NEILL.—If the system of catch cropping was more universally practised do you think that the farmers would be able to keep a larger number of stock in the winter period?—If they could be successfully grown they would enable the farmers to keep more stock. As a matter of fact I think some of the holdings are so small that without some radical change in the system of cropping such as has been advocated along the lines of catch cropping or continuous cropping you cannot materially increase tillage in the case of very small farmers.

373. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Is it your opinion that if in your district the Officers of the Department and the Organisers of the I.A.O.S. were to work together harmoniously that they might be able to effect a very considerable increase in tillage?—Yes, I should say so.

374. Mr. McDONALD.—The overseer in the district is appointed by the Department?—Yes.

375. And you say that he was not friendly with the Organisation Society?—I am not going to commit myself to that, but the prevalent belief is that he is not friendly.

376. Would it not be a curious thing if he was not friendly to the Society, to the members of which his Department was lending money?

377. The CHAIRMAN.—Your Co-operative Society was founded in 1898, but the implement branch was not started until a year and a half ago?—Yes.

378. The Department's operations were in full swing then?—They were.

379. For a Society that complains of overclogging do you think that that was a wise thing to do?—Yes, because the Menlough Society introduced implements into the district before the Department was in existence at all.

380. They got loans to buy these implements from the Department?—The point I want to make is that the Department was giving loans for horse-power threshers. The Menlough Society bought a power thrasher, and if there is to be an increase in tillage you must have a power thrasher. There were a considerable number of horse-threshers in the district before the Department was ever in existence.

381. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—You told us that eight years ago there was only one acre of tillage on your holding?—Yes.

382. What class of farming was used on the rest of the holding?—It was grazed.

383. Dairs or dry cattle?—Dairy cattle and sheep.
384. How does your profit compare with your profit when you were feeding dry cattle and sheep?—The profits from the farm have increased since I started the tillage, but I may add that the land that I cultivated was of a poor class and the profits in the tillage were small.

385. How much per acre did you make by grazing?—I have no figures.

386. Would it be 22 an acre?—Yes.

387. Not more?—No.

388. You don't fatten the sheep?—No, you could not fatten them on my land.

389. What is the valuation of your holding?—I don't know the valuation of one. I pay £12 a year rent for both. One is bought out.

390. Your land cannot be very bad judging from the rent?—I am over-landed on the land that I have not bought out.

391. You are a large farmer as farms go in Ireland. You have 100 statute acres?—Yes.

392. And 20 till the returns the 100 acre farm is a big farmer?—Yes.

393. You said that the labour question is the main question as regards tillage?—Yes.

394. You are aware that there are 600,000 farms in Ireland under 10 statute acres—that is half your amount?—Yes.

395. Is the labour question the main question for these 600,000 farmers?—Yes. I should think the labour question is very important with any man who has less than 20 Irish acres upwards except where a man has assistance by his own family capable of cultivating the land.

396. Is not that the usual thing?—Yes, but there are large numbers of men who have not families strong enough to help them.

397. I presume when you were speaking about the labour you were thinking probably about your-elf and farmers of your own class?—I had in my mind farmers who have themselves only to work the farm and must hire somebody.

398. That does not follow at all. Under 20 Irish acres you have half the whole number of farms in Ireland?—The labour question would not be the main question there.

399. With regard to these expensive implements that you talked about, would there be much room for improvements such as threshers and binders and mowing machines on the 250,000 small farms, a number of which are in Connaught, for instance?—They are not used in Connaught.

400. What about Donegal?—No.

401. West Cork is much of the same character as your country in Ulster?—In the district I come from all the land can be cultivated.

402. You could not start a steam plough?—Most of the farms in the West of Ireland are too small for a steam plough.

403. Mr. BAKER.—The net result of your comparison between wheat and oats was that they were equally profitable?—Yes, though the wheat returned 41 more per acre for grain.

404. What price did you calculate to make on the wheat and oats?—Well, I have not based my calculations on any particular price. They vary very considerably.

405. I am asking what price you calculate for the oats and wheat?—I made my calculations on the returns of the Department and I compared them with the returns of the International Institute of Applied Agriculture, and they practically corresponded.

406. Mr. O'NEILL.—The calculations were not based on your own experience at all?—No.

407. Mr. MCCORMACK.—What do you grow?—Oats, potatoes, turnips, mangolds, and rye for green feeding.

408. What labour have you got to work these nine acres of tillage?—One youth must do all the work of the farm with myself.

409. Mr. DOWNES.—Do you mean that you have no other help but a youth and yourself to mow and to reap and to draw in and pick potatoes and so on?—Except on special occasions, when I get extra help. Sometimes you cannot get the men for hire. The

man who has a team of horses gives them to a small holder neighbours in return for help at busy times.

410. Mr. BOND.—I understood you to say to Sir Horace Plunkett that if the Department's officers and the officers of the L.A.O.S. worked together that it would improve the farmers in your district?—Yes.

411. What assistance do your farmers require that they don't get at present from the Department's Technical instruction. It would be a very great advantage to have the Department's instructor delivering lectures to an organized body of farmers.

412. I understood you to say that the Organizer belonging to the Department is quite willing to give his instruction to all the farmers who require it?—Yes.

413. What more do you want?—Supposing we wanted a lecture or a series of lectures and the Co-operative Society undertook to organize them if the Department would give us an instructor we would like it.

414. Don't you think the instructor would rather give his instruction to 20 farmers than to one?—I have no doubt he would rather give his lectures to an organized body.

415. What facilities do you want that you are not getting?—We are of opinion that if the Co-operative Society applied for a series of lectures they would not get them.

416. The CHAIRMAN.—Have you ever applied?—No, we have not.

417. But you take it into your head, because people have put it into your head, that the Department would refuse you if you did apply. They will comply with your request the moment it comes?—We would like it.

418. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—You will be very glad to get that assistance?—Yes.

419. Mr. BOND has asked you what kind of help you require that you are not getting. Would it be right to put it this way, that the Organisation Society organized you for the joint use and use of agricultural machinery and that you would like technical instruction under the control of the Department by County Committees in regard to the use of the machinery?—Yes.

420. That would be a kind of co-operation between the Society and the Department that you would have in mind?—Yes.

421. The CHAIRMAN.—Is not there an instructor at the door?—Yes. At the time we got the thrasher and the engine he gave us no instruction in the use of it, and we had to apply to the L.A.O.S.

422. Mr. GILL.—Why didn't you ask the instructor?—I don't think he understood the machine.

That is another question altogether.

423. Mr. BAKER.—Does the Agriculture Instructor not hold lectures from time to time throughout the district?—Yes, but as a rule they are badly attended.

424. Mr. GILL.—Is there anything to prevent your members attending the lectures?—Nothing whatever.

425. Mr. DOWNES.—I think there is some confusion as to the question of the Instructor and Overseer. The Instructor is under the control of the County Committee, and it is open to any farmer to ask the County Committee to send that Instructor to the district. The Agricultural Overseers, on the other hand, are a body of men who are employed in congested areas for special work. They are not agricultural instructors. They are carrying out practical experiments. They give farmers practical demonstrations in the new holdings?—I am quite clear about that.

The CHAIRMAN.—And there are 22 of them in these ten districts.

426. Mr. DOWNES.—Is it not the case that any man who wants a loan in that district must go to the Agricultural Overseer?—Yes.

427. And does not the Overseer forward this application to the Department with his recommendations on it?—Yes.

428. That is the procedure?—Yes.

429. Seeing that the Department has granted loans through the Overseers does it not seem very strange that the idea should be prevalent that these Overseers are opposed to your society?

Mr. O'CONNOR.—I don't think we need labour the point.

Mr. JOSEPH HUNT, Bailiffary, Fournile-House, examined.

430. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—You are the Secretary of the Fournile-House Society?—Yes.

431. Is it a Co-operative Agricultural Society?—Yes.

432. When was it formed?—In March, 1914.

433. How many members are there in the society?—We started with 26 and it increased last spring to 89.

434. Are you yourself a farmer?—I am.

435. Are you the proprietor of the farm?—Yes, I am the owner of it.

436. How long have you been farming?—Practically all my life, but I only got into possession of the holding five years ago.

437. Tell the Committee how many acres have you?—About 25 statute acres.

438. What do you grow on it?—Potatoes, turnips, mangolds, oats, and wheat. We breed the young stock, the lambs. We keep about 40 sheep on it, between ewes and lambs.

439. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—How many ewes?—From 12 to 18.

440. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Have you taken an interest in what we may call the increased tillage movement?—Yes, I did my best to increase, and I have increased it very much.

441. How much?—From 3 acres in 1913 to 9 acres this year.

442. I think it would interest the Committee if you just told them generally what particular crops you have increased?—As Secretary of the A.O.S., I got the Committee to allow us to use their land to get an agricultural instructor there. In the course of his lecture he spoke about the necessity of more tillage in our district. In fact it was almost grass land all round, and the instructor told down the different varieties of manures and their qualities and percentages. We noted that he referred to nitrate of soda and nitrate of potash. It had never been used by us, or only a little. We asked the instructor what way we would set about getting the manures. We told him that the traders would not be willing to stock them, as nitrate of soda would melt away. He told me himself he was very sympathetic with the co-operative movement, that he saw that it could get manures at a reasonable price. I told him the high prices we had to pay for manures. I took steps to form a society for the purpose of getting manures and seeds for the farmers. There were some prescriptions against some of the local traders.

443. The CHAIRMAN.—Who was prosecuted?—A trader in the town of Rosemount.

444. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Was he a local merchant?—Yes.

445. The CHAIRMAN.—Who was the prosecutor?—Was it the Department?—No; the farmer that got the crop of rape seed instead of turnips. Owing to some technical point the farmer lost the case. After that we decided on forming the co-operative society. At the meetings of the society the organizer used to state that we had very little tillage and that we ought to sow more, and, of course, we knew what slavery it was throwing the oats with two bits of stick. We decided on getting in some machinery, and the first thing we decided on getting was a threshor. We didn't know it until the Organizer told us that there was such a thing as a portable oil threshor although we had the instructor in the district for a whole winter.

446. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Did you ask him?—We did not know they were in existence. It was his duty to tell us that they were in existence.

447. The CHAIRMAN.—Had you any trouble in getting the instructor for your meeting?—No, we had no difficulty.

448. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I understand before the society was started you had a meeting in the Effingham Hall?—Yes.

449. The instructor attended, and you spoke to him about the purchase of co-operative manures and seeds and he was very sympathetic?—Yes. At the same time he told us that he did not want to interfere, that the Department was not in sympathy with the L.A.O.S., and that he did not want to get his name down.

450. We have got to the point where the society is formed and under the advice of an Organizer of the L.A.O.S. you purchased a power threshor?—Yes.

451. Did you purchase any other implement?—At that time we only purchased a power threshor for lifting out, but at the same time some of the organizers of the L.A.O.S. came to instruct us with this power threshor, and they saw the necessity of a different make of plough. We never saw a wheel plough at work in our district. It was a common report that it would take two stallion horses to work them, and we had only three quarter draught mares, and so some afraid to venture on wheel ploughs.

452. There was not very much advanced farming in your district?—No.

453. Was it mostly grazing land?—Yes, except potatoes for our own use. The people used to have to buy their flour and meal, and their tramps also in some cases.

454. Is this district you are talking of a district where the Congested Districts Board had bought a lot of land and handed it over to the tenants?—The land I live on was bought by the Estates Commissioners and handed over. The Board are now buying land.

455. The Congested Districts Board are creating a lot of new holdings, on what was formerly grass land?

—Yes. Nearly all the holdings are increased to 20 Irish acres in the County Roscommon.

456. I take it there is very little agricultural labour in your immediate district?—There is not one living in the district, except a tramp could come in that would take wages.

457. The CHAIRMAN.—Tramps don't work?—They might for a day to get rested and start again. We call them tramp labourers.

458. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—You having very largely increased your tillage, have the other members of the society also largely increased theirs?—Yes, all those that availed themselves of the machinery. There are 32 of the members that availed themselves of the machinery we got. Some availed themselves only of the threshor. Of the 32 I find that there are about 30 acres of an increase in tillage on their holdings over last year.

459. The CHAIRMAN.—What was the capital of your society?—£500. Our Committee went bail for it to the Bank.

460. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—What rate of interest did you pay?—4 per cent.

461. In this case you did not take this action upon an impression that the Departmental scheme had been withdrawn?—I asked the Department in a sense, but that was the time that there was talk of the loans being stopped. I wanted all the information I could get for the committee. The farmers knew very little about the business and I was supposed to find all the information for them. I was gathering all the information I could, and an official of the L.A.O.S. told me that I could get a grant from the Department to purchase a threshor. I wrote for particulars to my lecture the Committee, and in the meantime I met the instructor and he said, "I am afraid by the time you have applied the grants will be stopped." I brought this information before the Committee and they said, "If we get it now from the Department this season will be over before we get to do very much with it, and we will be paying interest. It would be best to go to the Bank for it, where we get the money for the manures and seeds, because the Department won't grant us money for manure and seed, and it is as well to get it altogether from the Bank." So we did go to the Bank.

The Department would be glad you got the money elsewhere, because they could use their money in other districts.

462. The CHAIRMAN.—I am listening with great interest. Is not the Bank the natural place to go for money?—It is, of course.

463. You get it quite easily?—Yes, we had to sign for it.

464. If there is a bank willing to lend money why should people in want of money go elsewhere?—If they could get it at a cheaper rate. Every halfpenny tells with the small farmer. What I want to bring out is that we would not have a threshor at all but for the L.A.O.S., because in the first place we would not get a number of farmers to go bail for the price of the threshor for the accommodation of the whole side of the country and taking risk of its being smashed up. When we started the co-operative movement we held every member responsible for 41 share

and if there is any difficulty in the working these responsible have authority over the members of the society to gather up this £1. We could get £62 tomorrow if the thief did not pay. There are thirteen guaranteeing for the wretches, scound, and thief. It would not come so heavy as long as £62 would be paid off.

465. Sir HENRY PARKMAN.—Every member of the Society stands behind them to the amount of their unpaid shares.—Yes, and only for that we would not get the farmers to so guarantee.

In the case of the Menalogue Society, the Department followed their usual practice. They got certain responsible persons to guarantee their loan, but the advantage of doing it through a co-operative society is that that body has every member of the society behind it, and we consider that this responsibility on the part of every member of the society has much more than its money value. That is a point I want to make.

460. The CHAIRMAN.—I think the rules of the I.A.O.B. have been declared by the Law Officers of the Crown to be invalid on that very point.

Sir HORACE FLEMING.—The Chairman is under a misapprehension. He is confusing Credit Societies under the Friendly Societies Act and Industrial and Trading Societies under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act. I say that the claim of the guarantors to the Department or the bank, in the case we are considering, upon the uncalled capital—the amount of unpaid shares held by every member of the society—is absolutely valid.

The CHAIRMAN—I was of the opinion that the Law Officers of the Crown pronounced it to be invalid. Mr. MONTAGUE—It does not apply to societies under the Industrial Act. They are exactly in the same position as an ordinary limited liability company. What the Law Officers declared invalid was in regard to societies under the Friendly Societies Act.

465. Sir HENRY PLESSERT (for Witness).—Do you wish to say anything further about the operations of your society, always bearing in mind that this Committee is only interested so far as they have a bearing on the increase of food production in Ireland?—The whole thing I would lay most stress on is the question of machinery, because I find that no matter how small the farmers are—even those having only 7 or 8 statute acres or thereabouts—they avail themselves of some part of the machinery belonging to the society in order to increase their tillage. For instance, the spring trowel barrows that we have hired out are of the greatest advantage. Where a man ploughs his land, the tilling might not be of the best; by getting a spring trowel barrow he is able to cultivate the land properly in half the time. I have brought it into small holdings myself with two horses and did the tillage with it. Every man, small or big, that knows anything about the use of the barrow is using it in our district and delighted to get them, because some of them can purchase them even with the loan system. No one likes to be borrowing. The money must be paid back some time or other, and the people

don't like it to be understood amongst their neighbors that they are borrowing. The farmers would rather buy the machine.

408 How any dissatisfaction arisen as to the arrangements for hiring out the implements?⁹—Not one bit. Now, for instance, a man would ask me if Sunday was the gibber at the house, that he would want it no more. He knows that the rules are that if a man wants he must go for it and want it he does not return it on the same evening he is charged for another day. It is at my house every evening except the man who hired it has two days' work so do. As soon as the man is done with it he brings it back, and if he does not bring it back on the day he gets it he is charged a second day's hire, so that we have the implements always under control. Nobody is dissatisfied. I would not tell anyone I would keep it from another—first come, first served. That is understood by all.

200. I only take it from you that on the whole you are satisfied with your society and think that it is a material factor in enabling you to increase the production of your land?—I am sure it is. I could never have half so much tillage or half such good crops, only for it. I would not be able to get my oats or wheat threshed in the winter time.

The CHAIRMAN.—I have nothing to ask you, but to wish you all prosperity.

The Wicken.—The tillage is increasing in my district, and the farmers are very much inclined to increase it. It makes very little difference what class of cattle we have on the land; we cannot keep them on to fatten from want of feeding.

470. Mr. PUMP.—Is it your experience that by the increase of tillage that you are also enabled to increase your live stock and to provide feeding for cattle and sheep?—Yes.

471. Is it not only the increase of tillage that is useful for the human population but it is also liable to increase the live stock?—Yes. It is for want of feeding that we have to sell the cattle skin and bone. We must have some land feeding and we cannot afford to go into the shop. The grass that is grown in the west of the County Roscommon is not really a satisfactory one.

472. If we want to increase the live stock and feed our own population we must have some additional...

450. What connection has your co-operative society with the Wholesale Society?—They have no further connection than that they get their stuff from it. They have under discussion being federated with the Wholesale Society.

474. You are not compelled to deal with the Wholesale Society?—No, but if we were federated we would. The society have that under discussion. If we got federated we would have to take shares and be responsible for it.

475. Sir HENRY PARKETT.—You are aware that if you are federated it does not bind you to deal?—No, it does not.

476. Mr. O'NEILL.—There is no compulsion on a member of the co-operative society to deal with the Landwise Society?—Kono.

Mr. T. WHELAN, N.D.B., N.D.A., Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, examined.

477. Sir MORRIS FLEMING.—The first question I want to ask you is, what was your training before you came to this country. You are not exactly an Englishman, but you were born in England. What was your agricultural training and experience before you came to Ireland?—I was brought up on a farm in Lancashire. I spent four or five years at an agricultural college and took up the National Diploma in both Agriculture and Dairying, and I had also training in engineering as well.

478. When did you come to Ireland?—In 1904.

structor under the Department?—Yes.

place I gave a lecture was in Four-mile-house, where Mr. Hunt comes from.

481. Your chief employment under the Department was in Limerick?—Yes, I was there for six or seven years, I think.

484 When did you become organizer to the I.A.O.B.?—Three years ago next November.

483. In addition to what you have superintended operations on several farms in Ireland, and lastly my own—some privately-owned farms—Yes. Since I am an officer only, and I have been superintending two farms directly, and I have been advising on perhaps half a dozen others. As regards the latter, I just drop in and tell them what I think should be done, but I take no responsibility for seeing that is done. The other two farms I manage completely.

484. Will you give us your general opinion on Irish agriculture as an expert as you see it to-day?—Ever since I have been in Ireland—all my people come from the West of Ireland, and in consequence I have been in touch with Ireland all my life—I looked on it as a very lamentable state of affairs that in this country of small farmers, that there should be such an extremely small amount of tillage. No country, large or small, that has not a good deal of tillage in it is in a healthy agricultural condition. My work under the Department was to endeavour to increase tillage

wherever I could. I have more or less extreme views on this tillage question. I don't believe that the system practised in England and Scotland can be made pay in Ireland.

485. Would you tell us to what causes you attribute the decline of agriculture in recent years?—The causes are, changed market conditions and foreign competition, climatic conditions, which are unfavourable to the Norfolk system, the labour difficulty, and the lack of implements. The principal of these causes are the climatic conditions and the labour difficulty. I think that the climate, whilst it may permit of a certain amount of tillage on the ordinary lines, is too variable to permit the carrying on of the Norfolk system on an extensive scale. Furthermore, I don't consider that systems of tillage intensive enough for small farmers. In the ordinary system of tillage we have about half the land in corn; the other half in roots and green crops. I have had very big arguments about increasing the corn area. (I was talking as a practical farmer.) It is all very well to talk about increasing the corn when you have such threatening weather as this, especially in spring and in the harvest. In the springtime men and horses are very often idle owing to the weather, and, further, under the ordinary rotation the land is nearly as long idle as under a crop. Continuous cropping can be so arranged that you have a perpetual harvest. Under this continuous cropping system, also, crops can be grown without involving a heavy outlay in labour, which is sometimes impossible to get and very often not worth having. We ought to go in for a system of intensive tillage, which can be worked at a very low cost, because it can be done by horses and machine labour. I don't think any man living at a distance from a large city like Dublin or Belfast can make the ordinary system of tillage pay really well. I have gone into the matter myself, and I know many Scotchmen who were brought to this country and for the one that succeeded forty or fifty went bankrupt. The climate is entirely against the ordinary system of tillage. I was in Limerick under the Department and I lived near a big farmer on whose farm I used to spend all my time on Sundays advising him about his farm. The cost of producing ordinary tillage crops was tremendous owing to the fact that he was held up so often by the bad weather, and although we grew the best crops, the tillage did not pay and he had to turn on to continuous cropping, which has paid. Mr. Russell published the result of that experiment in every paper in Ireland, and it is going on every year since, until at the present time that farm has up to 250 acres of tillage.

486. You heard Mr. Russell saying that in Ireland there are 7,000 acres under continuous cropping?

The CHAIRMAN.—I said that we estimate there are only 7,000 acres of catch crops in the country, 5,000 acres of which are in the province of Munster.

486a. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Have you any comment to make on that?—I have only to say that I am extremely pleased to hear it, because I can claim to have done a lot to start catch cropping. Continuous cropping is something of an extension of catch cropping in certain ways. While I am looked upon as an authority on continuous cropping, I don't know one-tenth of what there is to be known considering how suitable this moist climate is for continuous cropping.

487. There has been a good deal of confusion between catch cropping and continuous cropping. You are only personally interested in continuous cropping—a system that you have more or less helped to adjust to the conditions of this climate?—I used to do a lot of work about catch cropping in the commencement, and much of the Department's literature on the subject was written by me. Catch cropping is the first step that a man must take to get on to continuous cropping. You may call it the alphabet of continuous cropping. You can grow a patch of rye and rape and winter crops after a crop of corn. Once having done that then lay out a rotation so that the whole of the tillage is done on a continuous cropping system, which means that the land is never idle.

488. The CHAIRMAN.—Catch cropping may be called stealing a crop?—Yes; "a stolen crop" is a common phrase.

489. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—There are four main points that appear in your paper of evidence in connection with increasing the food production.—Let, the

system of tillage; 2nd, the effect on labour; 3rd, machinery, and 4th, co-operative organisation. On the question of labour, I think I have heard you say, or have read your writings, to the effect, that the continuous cropping system with the necessary machinery, although it might not economise labour, would have two results, one apparently paradoxical and the other obvious; first it would mean the permanent employment of much more labour, and, secondly, it would make labour much more efficient, and therefore it could be more highly paid. I think it would be very interesting to the Committee if you developed those points.—With regard to the labour, I have always wanted to do something for the Irish farm labourers. I have heard people talk of cheap labour in Ireland. The labourers' wages in this country are about half of what they are in the North of England, and in the North of England the labourers are chiefly Irish. The high rate of labour in Lancashire is really cheaper than the labour in, say, Limerick because the men do so much better work in Lancashire and they have the means of doing it. On the other hand, people say—in my own experience it is untrue—that you cannot get men to work in this country, that it is very hard to get labourers here interested in their work. A man has got to be a kind of half-bred to work under the conditions that he has got to work in this country. He works for a wretched wage with a tool 200 years behind the time; but from him in the man of machinery, pay him better, and you will get as good work from him as you will anywhere else. I have myself in Meath eighteen men who three years ago knew nothing of either implements or farming, and I would back them now against any body of men you can produce in these countries. They have the means of working and are paid 30 per cent. better than they were. The point about the extension of labour is this.—At the present time labour is very scarce in the country. With a more profitable system of farming and the more economic use of labour, far better wages could be paid; a better type of man would be required for the work and you would have better men remaining in the country. A man gets 12/- a week in a tillage district whether he works every day or not. In the harvest a farmer pays 2/6 or 3/- a day, say, to two or three men, and he has to give that when they cannot work owing to the weather; so that it really seems that for an effective day's work he often pays 6/- not 3/-, and that is what I think is wrong with the old system. In the District of Four-mile-horse one saw the young fellows threatening with a staff, and wages need to be at a low rate to allow of the use of such an antiquated tool.

490. Let us come to the parts of Ireland where the holdings are small and the owners do their own tillage. You, as the Organizer of the I.A.O.S. have taken, I may say, a leading part in trying to induce the small farmers to club together in order to get these labour saving machines?—Yes.

491. What encourage have you?—I really started this work when I was in the Department. I found in Limerick that no one was interested in tillage because they thought rich land should not be tilled. In the first place I found a tremendous inefficiency on the part of the farmers with regard to implements. I found that it was very well to tell men to till land, but if they had not the implements it was hard for them to do it. The next point is that most of them are small farmers.

492. The CHAIRMAN.—In Limerick?—Yes, in West Limerick. Economic plots I call the large holdings in East Limerick. There are about 65 per cent. of the holdings in Limerick with not more than 40 or 50 statute acres. They have not the money to buy the implements, and if they had the money I don't think it would be economic for them individually to get all the implements they would require to till on profitable lines. It would be much better for them to join together and get such implements as are vitally necessary to till the land. In Kilmallock I got the farmers to join together to get one or two implements—spring tooth harrows, wheel ploughs and simple implements of that kind, and having let the farmers see how these small implements worked, then I encouraged them to buy implements collectively—corn binders, disc harrows, cultivators, and power threshers. They bought the cheaper implements with their own money when they could, and with the Department's money when they could not. I told them that they must get the

larger implements co-operatively, whether the loan come from the Department or the bank. They buy 400 worth of machinery to begin with. These are purchased by the society and are then hired out to the members, and to non-members at a higher rate. The money earned is paid into the Secretary, and as it accumulates it is used for buying more machinery. I know in Kilsallack they earned £12 the first year with a binder; then they bought a potato-digging machine, and finally they practically got in this way all the implements from the hiring money.

483. The CHAIRMAN.—Was this in your Department days?—Yes.

484. Was there ever any difficulty placed in your way by the Department in doing this work?—Certainly not—except in so far that I gave up lectures against the wishes of my superiors in favour of practical demonstrations, but afterwards he agreed I was right. It was no use lecturing to people on tillage who could not plough.

485. In all this work which you have been describing you never got any opposition from the Department, but, on the contrary, assistance?—When I was with the Department I got assistance critically.

486. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Had you any assistance from the local organizer of the Organisation Society?—Yes, that was done with the help of your Organizer at the time. I did not know anything about raising money in the bank, and don't know yet about the pecuniary technicalities of co-operation, etc. It was the Organizer who promoted the whole thing. There was perfect co-operation between myself as the Department's servant and the Organisation Society with benefit to the district.

487. I wonder who was Vice-President then?—Mr. Russell.

488. The CHAIRMAN.—Can you tell me of any case where I even interfered?—You never interfered, but the impression was that it would not be healthy for the Department's Instructors to do certain things connected with co-operative societies.

489. I would advise you not to say things before the Committee that will involve the Department or their officials on mere suspicion of that kind?—Where suspicion! I have not said that I wish to involve the Department or their officials on mere suspicion. I can give instances where I was with the Department at the assistance I got, but I can also give instances where I was endeavouring to get these implements showing that I did not get the help from the Department's officials which I think it was their duty to give.

490. The Department's officials are directed by the Department?—Yes.

491. You don't object to that?—No, certainly not, but I can give instances of—

492. Let us have them.

Mr. DOWNES.—There has this Committee to do with the sympathy between the two bodies. We are called here to go into one matter and one matter only, and with a great deal of respect I submit that a great deal of the evidence we have heard to-day is quite outside the scope of our inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN.—Strictly speaking, I think that may be ruled, but if Mr. Witherby is prepared to say that the work of producing food is hindered and impeded by the friction between these two bodies I will hear him.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Hear him.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—The strong wish of the Organisation Society so far as they are responsible for having the subject of co-operation brought before this Committee is that there should be no reference to what has happened in the past but to consider whether we could agree on some system between these two bodies in the future that will lead to the increased production of food in Ireland.

Mr. BAKER.—Which course is more likely to succeed—is it by making up past differences or hearing expert evidence?

Mr. FRYER.—We want evidence that will guide us for the future without referring to past differences.

The WITNESS.—I think there is a tremendous lot of misunderstanding about my statement. I have no wish to convey that the Department or their officials refused to give help which they could to help on this work. My statement was that I did not get help.

from the Department's officials in developing certain work which I might reasonably expect. Let me explain exactly what I mean. I know every Instructor in Ireland. My point is—I want to speak very plainly—there have been times when I wanted help from Department Instructors in connection with implements that they have not given it, not because they had got any complaint against me or the co-operative movement, but simply and solely because I found they were deficient in a knowledge of implements. I am not saying that by way of disparagement.

Mr. FRYER.—What has that to do with the increase of food?

Mr. DOWNES.—This thing is going on almost the whole day. I would ask you to rule, Mr. Chairman, that questions of this sort are entirely out of order. I certainly think that it is time that we should come to an understanding that we are here for our purpose only.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I submit that the tendency of the evidence to-day, whether we believe it or not, is to show that among the agencies that would produce an increased food production is the action of these co-operative societies. These witnesses have made statements to show that it is so. If the statements go to show that the co-operative societies if they had more encouragement would do more, that is germane to the matter, but we agree that we don't want contentious matters that we can avoid.

The CHAIRMAN.—I have allowed a great deal of evidence to-day which, strictly speaking, was irrelevant. In what I am saying I don't include the evidence of Mr. Crowe or Mr. Hunt, which I consider relevant in every sense. I should have asked out much of Mr. Anderson's evidence if I had acted strictly as Chairman, but I am in a very difficult position when this question is touched. Everything that is said here to-day will be published. It is perfectly certain, as the American President would say writing to the German Emperor, I will be held to strict culpability. I would prefer to let these gentlemen have full liberty to state their case. If I rule against them, as you can compel me, it would be against my will.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I have done the most of the examination in chief and I think it will be found that I have not introduced any controversial matter.

Mr. O'NEILL.—I submit that the witnesses and those leading them might reasonably confine themselves to what can be done in the future rather than to the mistakes in the past. We all know that we all make mistakes. Let us profit by the mistakes if we can, but let us not discuss controversial points.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—That is what you will find was the substance of the letter that was handed in by the Organisation Society, and I have done my best to set in its spirit. As far as I have led the witnesses I hope I have led them in that direction.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am prepared to submit to the Committee a recommendation in favour of every effort being made to supply these implements to the people of the West of Ireland. Before a word was said my mind was made up on that. I am convinced of the necessity of supplying these implements in some way, and I think the County Committees are better than any Co-operative Society for the purpose. That matter must be faced, and I am prepared to submit to this Committee a recommendation on the subject.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—When the question of order was raised, Mr. Witherby made a suggestion which I think may be considered—that the Department might consider whether a special training in implements might not be a part of the instruction given to their Instructors in future in view of the probability of implements being more largely used in the country.

The CHAIRMAN.—That goes without saying. If the witness has any particular wish to prolong the subject after the statement I have made he may do so.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—The Committee has a right to hear evidence as to whether the best way to supply the implements is through the co-operative societies or through the Department. We had some evidence that the best way was through the co-operative societies.

503. **Sir HOWARD PLUNKETT**.—Do you wish to tell the Committee the result on increased tillage in the case of farmers who have bought implements co-operatively who could not get them otherwise?—That is one of the things I wanted to do, and I have gone to a great deal of trouble in the matter. Everyone is aware that we have to deal with a community of small farmers. When I was asked to come before this Committee a few days ago I immediately wrote to the Secretaries of Implement Societies which I have been responsible for starting and looking after. I give particulars in connection with the following four societies—Monaghan, Killybeg, Mounough, and Four-mile-house, which contain altogether 157 members. Most of the members started about two years ago and they have increased their tillage area on an average by 3.2 acres per man. In the whole 157 cases there are only two men who have not increased their tillage. There is a consistent increase through the whole lot. These are all small farmers. In each of these cases they are using small implements as well as large implements—small implements for which I have strongly recommended them to apply to the Department for loans; big implements which not a man in the 157 could afford to buy, and implements which in two cases have been purchased with the assistance of the Department's loan scheme. It was I recommended them to come to the Department. If we can bring about the same condition of affairs as exist at these four districts amongst the farmers in Ireland the increase in tillage would be about a million and a half acres.

504. **Mr. BORN**.—You said you communicated with the Secretaries of the Societies that you were instrumental in forming?—Not all the societies. I wrote to those men for information as I knew them personally.

505. How many replies did you receive?—Four out of five. The fifth wrote, but not in a way that the information could be used.

506. **THE CHAIRMAN**.—Can you tell the Committee how many of these societies are dealing with agricultural implements—these co-operative societies?—Of co-operative societies we have altogether about sixty that have gone into the thing. Altogether there are about 1,000 co-operative societies.

507. Dealing with implements?—No; they may sell individual implements, but the point I want to make is that in my opinion it would be possible to get at least 75 per cent. of these societies to take up co-operative work if, first of all, the ability of the implements and the efficiency as to what can be done with the implements is brought before them. If these people could be shown that there was a saving by using implements it would be possible to get every society in Ireland to take up this implement business.

Mr. BORN.—This Committee and the Department it may be agreed are anxious that every small farmer would use labour-saving implements. There is no content on that question.

508. **THE CHAIRMAN**.—You heard Mr. Hunt's evidence?—Yes.

509. Is there any difficulty in doing in other places what is done in County Roscommon?—Yes.

510. What is it?—There is this difficulty—I do not say it to disparage my late colleagues in the Department, but they have not the knowledge of the instruments that they ought to have. They have not that knowledge; neither have their colleagues in the sister countries. The whole trend of agricultural education was and is to give insufficient practical knowledge. I spent two years in an engineering shop after I was supposed to have been a qualified agriculturist. The agricultural instructor should have more knowledge about machinery than he gets at college. I would not ask him to give actual instruction in working the implements, but he ought to have a thorough knowledge of them. There is no harder working body of men in the United Kingdom than the instructors under the Department, but to ask them to take up the actual handling of implements is impossible. They are very busy already.

511. Is there an Agricultural Instructor in the West who does not know the use of implements?—There are very many of our instructors who don't understand the implements.

512. **Mr. McDONALD**.—Motors and binders cannot be used on small farms?—We don't ask the man with

one or two acres of tillage to buy a motor, but if he has only two acres he might join with others for the purchase of a binder. There is a small two-horse binder that would be useful to him.

513. A man would sow two acres of corn in three days?—But why should he spend three days when he could do it in three hours?

514. He doesn't want a big implement like a binder for two acres?—But the man now with two acres would soon have five or six, if he had a binder to save his crop with.

515. **THE CHAIRMAN**.—Is it your opinion that the instructors of the Department are not fit for their work?—That is not what I wished to convey.

516. **Mr. BORN**.—Your case is that these instructors have not the mechanical training to deal with modern machinery?—Yes.

517. **Mr. O'CONNOR**.—They must be qualified engineers?—Not necessarily. They want a first-class knowledge of farming machinery. Don't take me for a moment as disparaging the instructors of the Department. They are well qualified men, but they know little about farm machinery. I have written to them myself for instruction on other agricultural matters, and they in return often write and ask me for information on machinery and continuous crops.

518. **THE CHAIRMAN**.—The overseers in the West are the sons of good farmers who have been accustomed to the management of farms—men who managed their fathers' farms in Ulster. I would be very much surprised to hear that they did not know how to handle a plough?—They do.

519. Or a binder?—Few of them understand binders.

Mr. BORN.—He does not suggest that your County Instructor should have this special knowledge of new machinery, because, speaking with knowledge, few of the County instructors have the time to convey that knowledge. I think it would be an economic waste for the County Instructors to undergo a training of this sort.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Withersley says that one of the reasons for not doing what they have done in Lincolnshire is that the instructors are not fit to give this instruction.

520. **Mr. GORDON**.—You were not referring to the ordinary farm implements used on the farms?—Oh, no, the instructors know these implements well enough, but when you come to the new implements that could be brought in they don't know sufficient about them. They have not had time or opportunity to study the question.

521. Can that difficulty be got over in regard to motor engines by a mechanic being employed—a man who has a trained knowledge?—That is just the whole point that I want to make. The suggestion I was going to make was that it would be a great thing to give the instructors a working idea about the new machinery, but not to take up his time handling machinery himself, but to do what I did in Limerick with Mr. Gordon's assistance—train young fellows to do such work. What is wanted is that as soon as the implement is purchased a man should show the farmer how it is worked, and if that were done we would have no return to tillage.

Mr. McDONALD.—Is it not a fact that all the machine manufacturers send out an expert to show the purchaser how to work them. I am surprised to hear so much about the ignorance of the people when I understand they can compete with any country. I heard that from a Canadian.

THE CHAIRMAN.—All I can say is that the suggestion made by Mr. Gordon and endorsed by Mr. Withersley means a financial strain on the Department that cannot be undertaken at the present time. Mr. McDonald raises a question that I would like to have answered.

Mr. McDONALD.—I was not asking a question. I was stating a fact.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Are there many machines outside the ordinary ones that the farmers are accustomed to use besides these motor engines or binders. Binders are used extensively in Kildare, said, as I understand, all the men follow them and use them without any hitch. The only thing that surprises me is that there may be some difficulty about these motor ploughs that I don't believe in as a farmer. I would be slow to purchase one myself, but with regard to

these engines, they might require expert knowledge from a mechanic or by a man who had got some training in engineering, but that is only confined to about two classes of machinery above this technical knowledge would be required. All the others are well known, and the ordinary farmer does not require any more instruction in the working of them.

The Chairman.—The Department has no wish to embark on a great trading excursion; we have no money to embark on any excursion. I may say that I do not see much chance of the Department giving any money or any other public body either at the present time. I say that advisedly. I know that I am impressed with the necessity of machinery being loaned for the Irish farmer. As to the body that lends the money, that is a wholly different question. The State won't lend money to any society—the Department will have to raise it; it may be in other, but I am quite willing to submit to this Committee a recommendation in favour of the extension of machinery for the purposes of the Irish farmer. I am quite willing to do that. I don't want to hear any more about machinery because my mind is made up about it, and I will say that I very much doubt whether it would be possible at the present time to practically furnish an engineer for every district. The country would not stand it. I am personally anxious to hear Mr. Witherley on what he calls continuous cropping. I want this continuous cropping question laid before the Committee.

322. Mr. BORN (in Witness).—I want to know what the capacity of these motor ploughs is per day per acre?—Well, that will depend, of course, on the size of the motor. The size of the motor which I have is suitable for the average small farmer, and it can be used pretty well wherever you turn a pair of horses. I have been working one of these ploughs two years, and with a boy of fifteen ploughing 2½ acres at the cost of 3/- per acre all and doing with it everything that a horse can do except slow drills.

323. What was the price?—£105 before the war.

324. I see that between young horses and agricultural horses there is a shortage of 25,000. If there is to be an extra amount of ploughing done, there might be a call for these ploughs, and the Committee might recommend, if necessary, that they should be used. I wanted, therefore, to know what their capacity was and what their cost was?—Yes.

325. Mr. O'NEILL.—You spoke of having experience of one of these motor ploughs for two years?—Yes.

326. Have you experience of any motor plough other than that working at Killeen?—I had experience of one eight years ago that cost £500. It was worth at the end of two months about £5 for scrap iron. I have spent quite a lot of time in watching demonstration with agricultural engines and studying the motor ploughs.

327. What I wanted to know is, have you got what you actually consider is a sound, commercial investment for Irish farmers in the motor or motor traction?—Yes.

328. Is that the machine that was exhibited in the Dublin Show?—The small one.

329. The motor that Sir Horace Plunkett purchased?—Yes.

330. That is the most up-to-date and useful motor plough on the market at the present time?—Yes. There is one thing this Committee might attend to if they think well of it. I have always been in touch with implement makers. The position is this—if you had all the money you could wish to supply every farmer at the present time you cannot get the implement. If the Committee could do anything to direct the Government's attention to the matter, I think they would do a great deal of it.

331. Mr. BORN.—What does it cost to keep up a motor plough?—Fifteen per cent. would cover the cost of depreciation.

332. Mr. BARKER.—That means that it would last seven years?—Usually it would last longer.

333. The Chairman.—Let us get to continuous cropping. You have a splendid chance, Mr. Witherley—you want to give your views. I want you to explain what it is—I may not fit it into what, as I said before, catch-cropping is the first step that a farmer must take; but continuous cropping aims chiefly at the production of fodder and forage crops with a view of converting that food into either beef or

mutton or milk, and they show as designed that there is a continual harvest going on and a continuous sowing. Under a proper rotation system the land is never idle. You can get on an average two crops in the season, which means carrying double the amount of stock that the farm will carry under ordinary conditions and producing double the amount of manure, thus enhancing the fertility of the land. The crops require very little hand labour. Of course that means a lot. There is no horse-hoeing, or weeding, or hand thinning, which means that the man working on continuous cropping as compared with the man tilling on ordinary lines with the same amount of labour is able to till three times the amount of land that he would be able to till on his ordinary system of tilling. It is more or less amounting to being increasing under factory conditions. The continuous supply of work going on, cutting out idle days and having the land always covered with crops. That broadly is the basic idea of this continuous cropping. It is no use talking of this being an innovation. It is not. I have learned something about the growing of fodder crops in different countries and have simply fitted them on to suit the Irish climate and conditions of labour and farming.

334. Mr. HORACE PLUNKETT.—Would it help you to explain your system if some members of this Committee were to accept an invitation to go and see the work at Killeen?—They would have the whole thing before their eyes.

The Chairman.—We are all here.

335. Mr. MURPHY.—How can you have continuous cropping unless you have continuous growth, and how would you have continuous growth?—There is a good deal more growth in the land in Autumn and the early Winter and even in Spring than people are aware of. If you keep the low temperature plants that will withstand frost, I claim that frost and very cold weather will not affect the plants.

336. My experience is in my own county and my own farm that there is no growth after the middle of September until the early part of March or April?—If you get some of these low temperature plants they will grow if well advanced before winter.

337. What are they?—Giant rape, hardy greens, marrow stem, and the varieties of kale. These are winter crops such as kale that will grow in the soil during the winter months. At present we have given the oats and potatoes on some stubble land. We have cut that and made it into hay. It is a very rich food. It has been shown in the analysis that 25 lbs. of that is equivalent to one stone of crushed oats—that is very rich. Here we will cut about 20 tons to the acre and make it into hay. We have all this land till now and we have it sown now, one part with giant rape and another hardy greens, a special variety of winter turnip and still other parts with kale.

338. Mr. O'NEILL.—For feeding sheep?—Yes, or cows.

339. Have they any nourishing qualities—these turnips?—Yes. I have been able to produce milk at half cost of ordinary feeding, and produced as good milk, and at Killeen we turned this fodder on into beef and can get a good average live weight of 2½ lbs. a day per head.

340. Mr. MURPHY.—Do you think you could effect the same result in the North of Ireland generally?—In the County of Antrim they said I could not, and I tried. The first year I sown or less failed, but not now. I have been able this last winter to grow better crops in Antrim than I have in the South of Ireland. This catch hay has been grown in this County Antrim and is being analysed by the Department.

341. Mr. O'NEILL.—You quoted one figure that I would like to have reviewed again with regard to the increase from the food—2½ lbs. per day per beast?—That is right.

342. That is almost unprecedented?—You get 2 lbs. a day on ordinary food.

343. One and three-quarter pounds is never complained of?—We have done better than that.

344. Do you feed this stuff under cover?—No, in the open, except in shower weather. One great point about it is this—we will have about 20 acres of this giant rape in the winter. Instead of cutting off all these crops to a farm holding and the manure back to the land, there is a kind of increase in the soil which enables the cattle to eat an acre at a time without trespassing on the rest of the crop.

543. Mr. FIELD.—Like a sheepfold?—Yes.

546. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Are you speaking of the winter-time?—Only of the end of November and again on the 1st February.

547. The CHAIRMAN.—Where is your experiment in County Antrim?—At Braid and Duncane.

548. Mr. McDONALD.—In what condition is the land on which the cattle are standing when they are eating the stuff through the movable fence?—We have a movable house also, just of corrugated iron and which we move about from one place to another. In wet weather we bring the fodder to the house.

549. Mr. BORN.—What place do you say this system was tried in the County Antrim, because I come from County Antrim?—Braid and Duncane. In the County Antrim they did not do well the first season, and I said the reason was they put them in too late. The County Instructor tried catch-crops and they did not do well. Now they have gone to the continuous cropping.

550. Mr. FIELD.—What do you do in the frosty weather?—In frosty weather these crops cannot be used. You must have a certain amount of roots. Whatever crop we sow in springtime we sow after winter greens. I made some experiments, and we found on the 1st April that land cropped through winter contained only 18 per cent. moisture, while similar land left uncropped contained 50 per cent. The leaves of winter greens had exsipated the superfluous moisture from the soil.

551. The CHAIRMAN.—A farmer told me he tried continuous cropping, and he had to buy his hay and straw at the end?—I don't know the man, but I can quite do away of cases where they have been able to sell hay and straw through having continuous crops.

552. If you did know him you would have a great respect for what he said?—I am inclined to think he tried catch-cropping not continuous cropping, and didn't understand either.

553. No? He said he had to buy his hay and straw at the end?—I don't see why that should be, except he gave up growing hay and straw altogether.

554. Mr. O'NEILL.—I take it that you hardly advocate that in a 100 acre farm the whole should be devoted to continuous cropping?—No; it should be worked in the ordinary rotation and the two will help each other out. The rotation in one place would not soil another. If you want to produce beef you must arrange your rotation for that, and the same applies to milk.

555. Mr. FIELD.—I take it that what you call continuous cropping applies principally to producing the food for live stock more than for the man. I won't say that you altogether do away with corn crops, but your system does not take in the corn crop as the main product of the land?—That is so, because I don't consider that corn grows in this way under normal conditions could be carried on to compete with other countries and that the climate is against extensive corn growing and the labour and the conditions under which we work.

556. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Is there a danger in this system of continuous cropping that the crop that you intend to be grown and used at a certain time that you might be not in your calculation by a month and that it would be possible that you missed the next crop. Would there be overlapping?—Yes, with catch-cropping that would happen, but not in continuous cropping.

557. Mr. BAXTER.—How does the manure bill stand?—It is very considerably reduced after the first year.

558. Do you suggest that the artificial manure is not increased?—Yes, until he has got into the system. Then there is no need to buy manure beyond a little lime and a little phosphatic manure perhaps.

559. You mention as one of the merits the continuous employment of men on the farm?—Yes: my point is that where there is tillage on the ordinary lines on anything like a big scale, although the men are continuously employed there are many days that they cannot carry out effective work during bad weather: whereas in this system they can always be working at profitable labour.

560. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Is the farm that you are working this continuous cropping on in a district where the land is very rich and a lot of virgin soil still in use?—That point has been put before me—

that this Kilfenn experiment is all very well for a year or two, that it is tried on very good land, but this particular land that I am handling was let at rather a low rent and people don't want to take it for grazing. The point has been put that I have been exhausting the fertility of the soil. A close study of the farm accounts referring to the amount of foodstuffs and resources used on the farm will show that the land is not being topped.

561. Mr. O'CONNOR.—I should like to say that I don't wish to go into the merits of the system of continuous cropping. I think I would be correct in saying that any system that would be proved to be a practical success which would increase the tillage throughout Ireland would be welcomed by all agriculturalists, by this Committee and the Department. I don't want to go into the merits of the case with regard to continuous cropping, but there are a few questions I would like to ask. Would you not say that this system is an extremely intensive system?—Yes, certainly.

562. Would you not also say that to grow two crops where one only was grown per annum would require much more careful and intelligent management than is usually shown in the ordinary rotation?—No. I would not.

563. If you had to take two crops where you only take one won't the success of the system to a great extent depend on the time you get your crop in and out, because if for instance you missed two or three weeks through extremely bad weather the result might be that you would have a mis-crop or a crop that would be a failure. If that is the case does a system of this sort not require extremely careful management and considerable intelligence?—Well, my opinion is this, tillage, of course, of any description requires better management than it usually gets, but the man who is capable of tilling on the ordinary line and tilling well is also capable of tilling on continuous cropping because he has greater variety in the crops and a longer and more suitable period, summer and autumn, to get them in.

564. If you were to take the majority of tillage farmers, who are small farmers, and who have had already a system of their own which has been passed on for generations, to ask a farmer to change his system and adopt a new system, would not that require more careful management and intelligence?—No. I don't think so. These foreign crops are so easily grown in this country that the system would require less skill. People talk about requiring tillage on the old lines, forgetting that it requires a good deal of efficient hand labour which is not procurable. I remember when the labourers could do double the amount that they do today in all kinds of hand labour in the farm.

565. Mr. O'NEILL.—I am glad to say that that is not my experience of labour and that it has not deteriorated to that extent in my neighbourhood, if at all. Furthermore, in any district in which tillage has been continuously followed for the last 30 or 40 years there you will get as good and as efficient labour to-day as at any period of the country's history?—I agree with you—where the tillage has been continuous.

566. Mr. GANNON.—I hope you will understand that I am not trying to criticise continuous cropping—that I am not asking the question from the point of view of criticising your system?—I understand that.

567. I think that this system on the two farms that you have been carrying it out on has been in operation for less than two years on one, and for less than three years on the other?—Yes.

568. As formerly an agricultural instructor under the Department you probably are aware that the Department has been very careful before it recommended any particular system to have experiments carried out for quite a number of years, and the reason for doing so you will support, namely, that in a question of manures or crops if you draw deductions from one or two years results you may draw erroneous ones, and it is absolutely necessary to have experiments covering a number of years before you can draw reliable deductions. Is that your experience of the Department's work?—Certainly.

569. This is a most intensive system and only in the experimental stage. Don't you think it would require quite a number of years before the farmers would adopt such a system generally. In other words, don't

you think it would require a good many more years than, say, 1916 or 1917, before a system of this sort could be adopted on such a large scale as to bring about an increase of food production?—I don't suppose that every farmer could carry it on to the extent that we would like to see it, but most of our small farmers could start right now and before the end of 1920 get between 30 and 40 per cent. more out of the land that by leaving it in its present condition. Just the quality of the soil. I am willing to admit at the present time that some growing, which has increased, is a second principle, both from the standpoint of the farmer and the State. I am quite willing to admit that even growing should be extended, although in ordinary conditions I am not in favour of its extension, but I maintain this, that there is nothing to prevent it going on with continuous cropping.

350. I think you will admit from your experience of Limerick that it took a number of years before you were able to introduce catch-cropping?—Yes.

351. Before you thought of continuous cropping. Don't you consider that to bring about a large increase in tillage and food production it would take a great number of years before you could convince the farmers that the system was practical?—No, the farmer's mind is now more receptive to the idea. The Vice-President quoted figures to show that there were 7,000 acres under catch cropping. Two years ago there was hardly any catch cropping.

352. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—Mr. McDonald would challenge that?—Except in the County Cork.

353. Mr. McDonald.—I saw catch crops growing before Mr. Whitteley was born?—You might on small patches, but not on 100 acres.

354. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—How many thousand acres had you in Cork for the past thirty years?—I cannot say. There is only 7,000 acres in the whole of Ireland.

355. How much of that is in Cork?—I should say there are 300 or 400 acres in County Dublin without seeing the figures and in the southern counties, and even in Munster where they never were until a year or so ago. Anyway we have to admit that catch cropping has extended for the last two years, and the point is that if catch cropping has extended in such a short period then it is possible to have an improvement in continuous cropping.

356. Mr. GORDON.—I think you drew today a clear distinction between catch cropping and continuous cropping?—Yes.

357. A catch crop is a stolen crop between two main crops?—Yes.

358. Continuous cropping is a system of growing large crops as the main crop?—Yes. They lend almost immediately into one another.

359. If it is the case that there is a distinct difference you can understand that the Department's method not to publish the result of any of their experiments until carried on for some years and not to advocate any experiment until carried on for a series of years prevents them from approving or recommending continuous cropping until convinced that it was a practical system?—I don't see the relevancy of that.

360. It has been stated that the Department have approved of and also recommended continuous cropping.

Mr. O'NEILL.—Catch cropping.

361. Mr. GORDON.—No, continuous cropping, and that they also gave directions to the Inspectors to advocate it as far as possible?—I never heard that statement.

362. Mr. O'NEILL.—I did not hear it either. I have had the advantage of seeing some of the crops grown at Killybeg and I was very much interested in what I saw. Undoubtedly you have there actually growing at the present time a crop which would yield an enormous amount of food for live stock. I allude to that oat and vetch crop, which is certainly magnificent and must undoubtedly yield an enormous amount of food for stock. Of course, it is grown this year during the summer and as a main crop. How do you propose using the land after that crop is removed?—It is being removed in sections—the sections cut and harvested, and in succession one of these winter green crops sown.

363. Is it rape?—We vary. We put rape for one month, hardy greens and kale for other months, having in mind the kind of crop that is to follow. You cannot follow rape with turnips, we will follow the rape with mangolds and use mangold plants. Where

we have the rape and the hardy greens we put mangolds. Where we have the rape we put a few turnips and wherever one crop is coming in after the crop that it will follow without any danger of finger and toe.

364. Would it be possible to grow on that land two or three months hence the same sort of fodder if it is productive?—Yes.

365. Would you hope that having utilized the land in the way in which you have indicated during the winter and spring months that you will be then able to get sown in proper time the seed to grow another crop of similar weight to the present crop?—That would not be part of the system. We followed the winter greens with potatoes and roots.

366. Mr. O'NEILL.—Can you grow wheat, oats, and barley in your system?—Yes.

367. Mr. O'NEILL.—I asked you whether it was not your intention that where this continuous cropping was carried on that only a portion of it should be devoted to that particular industry and that it could be transferred from one portion of the land to the other as circumstances permitted?—That is so.

368. You don't contend that you can grow these winter crops and then a crop of wheat the same year?—No, not on the same field, of course, but one will follow the other.

369. The CHAIRMAN.—Did you say to Mr. Field that this system was a system mainly for the production of food for animals, because, of course, that captured Mr. Field at once. You have got him now. Is that what you really meant?—Yes, sir.

370. This system is for the production of food for animals and not for man?—The chief point is to grow food for animals, and these animals are food for man.

371. Mr. O'NEILL.—Have you ever weighed the produce of these vetch and oat crops?—Yes, every year.

372. What yield would you get per acre?—Four to six tons of hay to the Irish acre—on an average 3½ or 4 tons to the statute.

373. Would you think it more economic to feed it green to cattle under shelter than to run the risk of having it spoiled by the weather?—In the summer time?

374. Yes?—We have a portion for that purpose. There again you modify continuous cropping. The crop you saw there last week was taken out and saved during the wet weather as ensilage.

375. What I am asking is, would you think it more profitable to save that crop as hay and dry it as winter food or give it green to cattle under cover?—It is a matter of convenience. There is no feature of the whole system so profitable, especially for the small farmer, as to have a continuous supply of green food to help out his pasture. At the present time I am carrying the equivalent of 40 head of cattle on 15 acres of pasture, because I laid out to have two statute acres of green still every month. I sold 44 cows and 13 two-year-old cattle off that piece of pasture. Pasture to the small farmer is almost waste land.

376. Mr. GORDON.—You are prepared to recommend this system to so many farmers as are in a position to take it up and are willing to do so?—Yes.

377. And you would like this Committee to recommend it also?—That is for the Committee.

378. You would advise them to do so?—Yes.

379. In one case you are experimenting for two years and in the other case for less than that?—Yes.

380. This is a system changing the whole rotation upon which the agriculture of this country has been hitherto carried on. I take it from your answer to Mr. Gordon that you would agree in order to come to a firm conclusion upon such a problem as that that it would be necessary to have experiments carried on for a series of years?—Yes.

381. So that the matter is still in an experimental stage?—No, sir.

382. Whatever you might do yourself individually you would not expect a Committee like this or a Department upon such brief experience to recommend such a wholesale change to the country?—Well, now, sir, I am doing my best to avoid anything of a controversial nature, but whilst I am only carrying out these experiments under conditions which have been laid down to me by Sir Horace and a private farmer, I have to say also that the results obtained in Killybeg are not to be compared with the results in Limerick for eight or nine years,

where the small farmers had to do the thing out of their own pocket. I can put you in touch with farmers who have been doing this for eight or nine years. I cannot say that these farmers will supply you with a *q. & d.* argument, but they can tell you that they doubled their stock, got out of debt and have money in bank. The biggest argument they have put before me is that where they had only half an acre they have 20 acres of tillage. I have sufficient experience of this country, and a lot before I came to the country at all, to say I have no doubt at all (except as regards the North—I am not convinced there). I am convinced that it is more profitable than the ordinary system of tillage.

602. You are satisfied that the matter has been sufficiently experimented upon to justify a universal recommendation on the subject?—Yes.

603. The Chairman.—That recommendation would be justified?—Yes.

604. Mr. Downes.—Do you think that, taking into account the ignorance of the people of this system and the necessity during the next 12 or 18 months of raising the largest quantity of food possible, that it would be possible—I am not speaking of the merits of the system at all—to get the Irish people to understand this system and put it into operation in the next six or eight months, or would it be better for the Committee to go on the lines that the people know?—I say most certainly it would be useful to recommend this system, because it could be done without interfering with the tillage they are already doing. If they were to adopt continuous cropping along with their ordinary cropping, if the war ended to-morrow, they would be inclined to continue their tillage.

605. Is it possible in the coming year to get this system into operation?—Yes. There is any amount of poor pasture land in this country. It would, for instance, be very little trouble to rip it up at once and sow giant rape for food in February. Here is the case of one man who did it. Including labour, manure, seed and everything it cost him to till 16 statute acres £20 4s. 5d., which means that a ton of green fodder only cost 1s. 4d. to produce. That could be done on the poor pasture land at the present time without interfering with ordinary operations.

606. Mr. Downes.—The point I want to raise is, is it possible to get the Irish farmer, who is absolutely ignorant of this system, to trouble to this idea and get into working operation and get the fruits of the system in the coming year?

The Chairman.—Mr. Withersley is an enthusiast. He would be no use if he were not. Suppose that this can be done. I myself think that the farmer would find it a regular intellectual pursuit. Speaking as Chairman of this Committee, I have no more belief that you can get the Irish farmer to take up this system at once than I have that you are going to force the Dardanellies. I don't find the least fault with Mr. Withersley for standing his ground.

The Witness.—I advocate this as an adjunct to the ordinary system during the war.

The Chairman.—You are a practical farmer. Mr. McDonald. Are you prepared under the present circumstances to adopt this system?

Mr. McDonald.—I am not going to grow vegetables and oats to turn into sludge in preference to barley or wheat or oats.

Mr. McNamee.—I will give my experience in regard to what Mr. Withersley recommends. A few years ago I was late in getting in my full crop of turnips. I had about three statute acres that I was not able to get in and I was advised to grow vegetables and oats, and that I would have at least a profitable crop. I did so. The result was that I got next to nothing. The vegetables did not grow, the oats did a little, but the main crop was weeds. I tried again in good land. I put in a crop of rape in the hope of having early spring feeding. I had next to nothing from it. I would not think of putting my name to any such recommendation.

The Chairman.—I am glad to have the opinion of farmers on the matter.

Mr. Bore.—We tried growing rape, and it was not a success as a catch crop. We found that rats and vermin if sown late did not do work.

Mr. McNamee.—The crop I am referring to was sown at the latter end of July.

The Witness.—A most unsuitable time for such a crop.

607. Mr. Bore.—You spoke to Mr. Downes about second class grazing land that had been used for continuous cropping. Now, if a practical farmer after you ploughed and dressed that land with artificial manure what crop would you expect of his oats?—If well sited and manured, about 160 stone of oats and about 2 ton of straw.

608. That would be £12?—Yes. The labour in that particular case would not be a lot. The manure and seed would be costly. Between labour and manure and seed it would cost only about £2 to sow it with rape.

609. What would it cost for oats?—The ploughing would cost about 12/6; the sowing a 1/- for the man; it would be harrowed and rolled for 1/-; the manure would cost about £2; it might have to be spread at the cost of 10/- an acre; the binder and horse labour would cost about 19/-; stacking and carting, roughly speaking, would cost 7-6 an acre; threshing, 10/-, and seedling £1 4s.

610. That would make a total of £5 4s. without spreading, and the produce is worth £12?—You have also to take the weeds and the rates and the taxes into account.

611. This is second quality land that would take two or three acres to graze a cow?—Yes.

612. The rent and the rates and the taxes were all on when the place was grazed, so there is nothing extra under these heads?—That is so.

613. I suppose 30/- an acre would cover rent and rates and taxes?—I suppose it would.

614. That would leave a net profit of £5 4s. 6d.?—There is the reduction of fertility, which must be made up by the application of 45 worth of manure for next crop and the risk of the crop lodging and rotting.

615. These 200 acres of land at Kilmuckish show a net profit of £300?—I have to compete with the grazier. I undertook to pay the same rent as the grazier plus 5 per cent. on the capital invested. The rent there was £6 per acre (Irish).

616. Mr. Gordon.—I think you said that this continuous cropping has been carried out on 6 or 7 farms in Limerick for the last 7 or 8 years?—One hundred farms.

617. But you have no figures to prove your result. You have based your calculations on the fact that these men had increased their stock and their tillage?—Yes.

618. The only real experiment that has been carried out where figures have been published is in the case of Kilmuckish?—Yes.

The Chairman.—We have had a most interesting day. I want to say that I think a good deal of what has been said here to-day is irrelevant to the Reference. You may ask why I permitted it. I promised Sir Horace that he would have a fair run for his scheme. I have carried out that promise, and if I had not done it, well I should be personally blamed and satisfied. I have allowed a free vote rather than put a single obstacle in the way of the evidence that he proposed to submit. I heard all the evidence he submitted and no one can say that they did not get a fair hearing. I have been personally interested in Mr. Withersley, and the impression left on my mind—it is difficult for a non-agriculturist to deal with it—is that it would be quite impossible to bring this scheme into operation for a good many years to come. The Irish farmer is very slow to change, but what does affect my mind is this, I think the whole agriculture of Ireland would be revolutionised by this system, and you are not going to carry out a revolution in a day. I am much obliged to you, Mr. Withersley, for your very clear statement, and I am sure the Committee is also obliged.

The Committee then adjourned.

THIRD SITTING FOR TAKING ORAL EVIDENCE. 23RD JULY, 1915.

The Committee met at the Royal College of Science, Dublin, at 11 o'clock, a.m.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT WERE:

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., *Chairman*.

Mr. JOHN BALWILL.
Mr. HERMAN T. BAKER, D.L., M.P.
Mr. C. F. BASFORD, M.A., L.L.D.
Mr. L. P. BOLAND, M.P.
Mr. EDWARD N. BOWEN.
Mr. ROBERT DOWDNEY, J.P.
Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.
Mr. T. P. GILL.
Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc.

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLA.
Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P.
Mr. HERMAN DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L.
Mr. GEORGE MURPHY, J.P.
Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR.
Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P.
The Right Hon. Sir H. PARSONS, D.C.L.,
K.C.V.O.

Mr. L. A. M. MORRIS, M.A., D.L., *Secretary*.

Mr. JOSEPH HARRIS, General Manager, Messrs. W. & H. M. GOSLING, Ltd., *examined*.

600. Mr. GOSLING.—You are General Manager of Messrs. Gosling and Co., Ltd.?—Yes.

601. We all know they are largely interested in the manure trade?—Yes.

602. Would you be good enough to make a general statement as to the supply, I suppose that, of course, is what we are anxious about, for 1915?—Do you mean for the coming year?

603. Yes?—I may say that in addition to being Manager of Messrs. Gosling, I am Chairman of the Irish Fertiliser Manufacturers' Association. It represents all the manufacturers in Ireland. I have been requested on their behalf to give any information in my power to the Committee. We estimate that the consumption in Ireland during the last season would be something like 240,000 tons of fertilisers and there is a certain amount of movement to and from England and Scotland which nearly balances each other. This movement of trade sends about 10,000 or 15,000 tons from Ireland and brings back about an equal quantity from England and Scotland. There is an export from the United Kingdom of about 80,000 tons. I understand that just recently the export of superphosphates has been prohibited; but it can be exported still on licence on certain conditions. I think that there is an ample stock and manufacturing power in the United Kingdom for a largely increased consumption provided the export is not too great, but there is very strong demand for export.

604. To neutral countries?—Yes, and especially to Denmark and the Colonies. I think it would be well to ascertain what markets there is for export, and to restrict it if necessary.

605. Would this be possible?—Of course the Government have already prohibited its export except under licence, and they need not be so easy about granting licences. In every individual case the makers must apply for a licence before they can export. It does not affect Ireland, because for the last two or three years we have practically given up exporting to foreign countries and confined ourselves to the United Kingdom, so that prohibition to export would not affect Ireland.

606. Mr. O'NEILL.—Except the raw material?—The raw material is nearly all imported. Phosphate coming from America has gone to a very high price owing to high freight.

607. Mr. GOSLING.—Are you referring to the phosphatic manures?—Yes, not basic slag. I include sulphate of ammonia and nitrate of soda. The consumption of sulphate of ammonia would be about 6,000 tons and the production in Ireland only about 2,000 tons; the nitrate of soda is, of course, all imported.

608. The CHAIRMAN.—In regard to seeds, the Department is now in process of finding out what the export of agricultural seed was during the years before the war—say, three years ago, and we were disposed to advise the authorities in England not to allow a larger export now than was the normal trade three years ago, because we have very strong suspicions that

the extra trade goes to the enemy. That would not apply to the manure trade at all?—Of course it is hard to say. There has been a large export of superphosphates to Denmark and other countries.

609. Mr. GILL.—Thrasher than previous to the war?—Yes. Manufacture in Holland is practically at a standstill. I take it what you want to know is if more manures were required whether it would be available?

610. That is the question?—Well, I suppose the increase would come largely out of the pasture land. A great deal of that is already being top-dressed by phosphatic manures.

611. Mr. BOWEN.—A great deal of it is not top-dressed?—No, but supposing half of it is. Nearly half the phosphatic manures used in Ireland are for top-dressing grass.

612. Mr. GOSLING.—The consumption of phosphatic manures is over 200,000 tons, and the whole impact of basic slag is not more than 15,000 tons. In Ireland there is almost twenty times more superphosphate used than basic slag.

613. You will admit that there are great areas of pasture not top-dressed at all?—Yes. If the area under corn were increased by 200,000 acres it would come off the grass acreage, but probably half that acreage was not top-dressed at all last year.

614. Mr. O'NEILL.—A much larger percentage?—I think that the trade could produce sufficient manures to adequately fertilise a largely increased acreage.

615. Mr. GOSLING.—You say that the consumption in Ireland has been about 240,000 tons?—Yes.

616. Would that be last year?—This year and last year were very much the same.

617. Has that been increasing during the past ten years?—Yes.

618. Can you give us any idea as to the increase?—An average of five per cent. per annum.

619. If there was a greater demand during 1916 would it be possible for the Irish manufacturers of manure to produce a larger quantity than at the present time if they were made aware in time that it would be required?—Yes, subject to our getting the raw materials.

620. Would there be any difficulty in procuring raw materials for superphosphates?—Yes, there is a great difficulty. The freights are very high. A great deal of the phosphates come from the Southern States of America. The freight on these raw materials was costing us 15/- a ton before the war, and I don't think now we would be able to get a steamer to take it at 45/- a ton.

621. The CHAIRMAN.—Subject to price, you think the materials can be got?—They can be got so far. It is a question of transit facilities.

622. Would you consider it a hardship if the Government stopped the licences and prohibited the export of superphosphates from the United Kingdom?—It would be no hardship so far as Irish manufacturers are concerned. In England there is a similar association to

ons and the Board of Agriculture might ask them what margin they have for export, and unless the Association in England are able to show that there was a margin available for export there could be no hardship in preventing exportation.

642. Mr. GEMOS.—It would not affect the Irish manufacturers if the export was prohibited?—No, but it would affect the English manufacturers and they might consider it a grievance, but they would have to show that they had a margin available for export, and I don't think they would have very much margin if there is going to be a big increase in home consumption.

643. Mr. BOW.—Though it would not affect Ireland directly, if there is any prohibition it must be from the three kingdoms?—Certainly.

644. If the English and Scotch manufacturers could not export their stuff they might come into competition with you?—It would be all the better for the Irish farmers.

645. You would not object to that?—We would take the risk. I don't think the whole of the export from the United Kingdom is ten per cent. of the production. I don't think you will that there would be very much injury if the export were prohibited or limited to whatever margin other home requirements can be proved to be available.

646. Mr. O'NEILL.—It is also contemplated that there could be an increase of tillage over the United Kingdom. The entire of the available materials would seem to be necessary for use in the United Kingdom?—I should think it is very likely. What is exported should be used at home this year.

647. And under these circumstances there would be no hardship on anyone by prohibiting export?—I don't think there would be much. Ours is a season's business, and when the season finishes up in June the manufacturer has either to stop making or storing and he exports it in the off season.

648. Mr. FIELD.—Where does he send it?—To Denmark and the Colonies principally.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—In my opinion there is very little artificial manure used on land that would be suitable for tillage.

Mr. O'NEILL.—I quite agree.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—People who use artificial manure use it on land which is entirely unsuitable for tillage purposes. It is more an low lying land. These manures are used for meadow and not for tillage or pasture.

649. Mr. O'NEILL (to Mr. BOW).—Mr. O'CONNOR's point is that you need not take into account any decrease in the demand for manures that are used on grass lands in consequence of increased tillage?—Yes.

650. Mr. GEMOS.—As far as superphosphates are concerned you don't fear any shortage in the raw materials from transit difficulties. Is it not the case that you have in Ireland a fairly good supply?—Yes, but of course it has to come in regularly during the year. Some of these cargoes may be lost or sunk. We had a ship with 5,500 tons. It was boarded by a submarine, but they let her go. They sunk one steamer coming to Dublin with pyrites.

651. You don't expect any shortage compared with previous years?—No, except there is something to stop the movements of ships.

652. The CHAIRMAN.—Apart from the submarine difficulty it is a question of price?—Yes.

653. Mr. FIELD.—Are ships available if you are willing to pay an extra price?—It is very difficult at present to get ships from the Southern States, but we have had ships from the Gulf all the same.

654. Is there any great shortage of American ships?—Yes.

655. Mr. GEMOS.—With regard to nitrate of soda, do you anticipate any shortage?—No. It is a question of freight again. The prices will be higher on account of the higher freight.

656. With regard to sulphate of ammonia, what is your opinion?—It is very difficult to say, because the Government have commandeered a great deal of the acid which is used for making sulphate of ammonia and taking it for making explosives. There is an estimated reduction of about 25 per cent. in the production of sulphate at the present time, but two-thirds of the usual production is exported. Here again the country has it in their own hands to say how much we want at home, and only after the excess is to be exported.

657. With regard to potash manures, is there any possibility of getting any supply in this country?—I am afraid not.

658. In regard to the growing of wheat and oats would mixtures of manures which did not contain potash affect the yield?—I don't think so for a couple of years, especially in the case of corn crops.

659. Would you say that it would affect the corn crop less than other crops?—Yes. It is more necessary for potatoes and flax.

660. And even in the case of these crops don't you think we could do very well without it for a couple of years?—The potato crop this year does not look too bad and they did not get one-fourth of the potash applied in previous years.

661. Mr. O'NEILL.—With regard to the stocks at the present time, are the stocks of raw material below the normal?—There are just about normal levels.

662. Mr. BOW.—That is the question I was going to ask you. Strictly speaking we have no right to ask you what the reserves are?—If the shipments were to cease we could not have sufficient. We have only a working stock, two or three months' stocks of certain materials. Supposing there was a stoppage we could probably keep our factories going for two or three months.

663. What is your opinion as the cost of manures next year to the farmer?—My own belief is that if the farmer is prepared to pay about 6/- an acre more for artificial manures he will get all he wants.

664. Has there been any change in the price of manures this season compared with last year?—Yes.

665. What has been the increase?—From 3d. to 1d. per cwt.

666. Mr. O'DONNELL.—Does your estimate of 6/- an acre cover nitrate of soda?—Yes. On the usual dressing.

667. Mr. BOW.—On the excess freight there is but a loss of a net increase?—That is only one item. You may take it that as far as I can estimate superphosphate may cost 1½ more per cwt.

668. Mr. DUNN.—You say that if farmers were prepared to pay 6/- more an acre that they would be able to get all the manures they wanted?—Yes, if we know in time.

669. Does that mean that there is no necessity for this Committee to make any recommendation about restriction?—No. I meant to suggest that it might be conveyed by the other side that there should be no export of superphosphates unless there proved to be a margin above the home requirements.

670. Would you confine yourself to superphosphates or would you apply the restriction to sulphate of ammonia?—Yes. I would restrict the export of both.

671. Mr. GEMOS.—With regard to slag, what is your opinion?—I am not in the slag business, but I expect that there will be a shortage as compared with last year. I don't think you will get the same tonnage.

672. Mr. BOW.—You said that the English manufacturer might have a grievance if he had a balance left over at the end of the spring. If the export were stopped until after the spring crops were in for next year there would be no grievance?—Some manufacturers would like to export between now and Christmas. If they don't do it at that time they lose their markets abroad.

673. The CHAIRMAN.—Assuming that the submarine difficulty does not become intensified do you think that it would be possible to get the supplies of raw material from abroad and that the only question would be one of price?—I think so.

674. Would you be prepared to go further than a mere prohibition of these articles from this country to neutral countries. Don't you think it would be fair to say to these neutral merchants, "What trade were you doing with the Central European powers before the war?" and finding that out, to say to them, "We will consider that amount of trade and no more. We don't guarantee that we shall have that, but we shall be prepared to consider that trade as a normal trade between this country and neutral powers. Anything else will be a trade under suspicion."—Of course there are a great many of these countries who have been trading largely through Germany, and that market is shut, so I think they would have no difficulty in showing that they want it for their own requirements. The question is whether we should give it if we want

it ourselves. There is a question of how far the Government will go in the regulation of sulphuric acid. They have already considered a certain quantity which will have a reflex action on the amount of superphosphate and sulphate of ammonia produced.

674. My opinion is that the loss of these articles will be out of the country the better?—We should ascertain what we want at home, and see that that is not exported.

675. Mr. FLEMING.—Have you any idea as to whether the exports have gone into Germany through neutral countries?—I do not think in our class of business it has, and I don't think that would apply to sulphate of ammonia because Germany is a big producer of that article herself.

676. Mr. GILL.—I would like to be clear about the question of price. Do I take it that the price of artificial manures is going to be put up 1/- a cwt. more than last year?—I do not think that the farmer will be likely to have to pay more than 1/- a cwt. extra for his superphosphates.

677. Supposing there was an increase of 200,000 acres of tillage you said that the farmers ought practically to make up their minds to be ready to pay 6/- an acre more for manures?—Yes.

678. You really think that that is about the estimate in view of all the circumstances which have to be taken into account. The importance of that in that supposing amongst the expenses that had to be considered by the Government with a view to getting an increased food supply there was an idea of fixing a minimum price for certain crops, that minimum price would have to be estimated upon the cost of production to the farmer, and a very essential part of the cost would be the cost of his manures. You cannot fix a minimum price with a satisfactory result if the price of the manures were afterwards to go up?—I take it that you have information as to what the manures have been costing before the war in normal times and I should say that to that toll there would be an increase of about 6/- a statute acre.

679. Mr. McDONNELL.—Including nitrate of soda?—Yes.

680. Mr. BARRIE.—To make it quite clear I put a question as to the price that was charged by manufacturers this season, and did I take it correctly that no advance had taken place already?—There is no business now.

681. Did the farmer pay more this Spring?—He paid about 3d. per cwt. more.

682. You think the maximum amount would be a further advance of 3d.?—Yes; I don't think it would be more than 1/- per cwt.

683. Mr. BUNNELL.—You have given the Committee as one of the reasons for the increased price now and in the near future that it is largely owing to freight?—Yes.

684. Are the Irish railways charging more for the conveyance of manures than before the war?—No; the four per cent. addition was put on before the war broke out. The Irish railways have not raised their rates.

685. Mr. FLEMING.—Don't freights in ships include war insurance?—Yes.

686. And also there is a scarcity of vessels?—Yes.

687. Mr. GOSWELL.—You mentioned that there was a considerable export in phosphoric manures and a considerable export of sulphate of ammonia over and above what is consumed in the British Islands?—Yes.

688. Is there a large export of nitrate of soda from the British Isles?—There is some, but that is small because nitrate of soda comes from Chili. It is only small parcels that can be re-exported.

689. Is there any likelihood of there being a shortage?—I do not think that there will be any shortage of nitrate, and the price will depend very largely on the freight.

690. Is it possible to prohibit the export of nitrate of soda?—I don't think you need trouble about that as you cannot export much with profit.

691. Is it the case that there is a considerable quantity of Peruvian guano used by farmers in the West of Ireland?—It is a small percentage of the whole, but there is some.

692. Is the supply of that likely to be normal?—No; you can get Peruvian guano, but the freights are now about 70/-, the normal rate being about 27/-. That makes it very dear. As far as Peruvian guano is con-

cerned, the quantity required for normal consumption is already in stock, but it would be difficult to procure any extra supply.

693. Mr. McDONNELL.—You said there was a shortage of bone slag?—I think so; of the high grade at least.

694. Do you think that you would be able to supply the superphosphates?—Yes, but you can fall back on waste finely ground phosphate if you have not sufficient bone slag.

695. Mr. GOSWELL.—You can grind it fine?—Yes, that is necessary.

696. Mr. HORACE PROBERT.—You were asked about the reserves of various manures. I was not quite clear whether you mentioned reserves in the United Kingdom or in Ireland?—I don't think we should call them reserves at all. In the factories we must always have a manufacturing stock.

697. When you were asked what reserves we had I am not quite sure whether the question referred to Ireland or to the United Kingdom?

698. Mr. O'NEILL.—I alluded to Ireland?—The working stock that is carried by the manufacturers is pretty nearly normal except in the east coast; there has been a great difficulty in shipping in those places and consequently the stock is better normal.

699. That is the east coast of England?—Yes.

700. Do you sell fertilisers on the basis of unit values?—Invariably.

701. How are they arrived at?—They are based on the cost of the different materials from which they are produced.

702. Was that always the practice?—I don't think that it was. More or less the price was always based on cost, but selling on unit values is now generally adopted in Ireland. It is based on the price per unit of phosphates, nitrogen, and potash, respectively.

703. If you go back twenty-five years, has not there been a very great change in the methods of sale and purchase in Ireland?—Yes, the consumption is more than double what it was and the manures used are of a higher quality?

704. Would you not see that owing to the teaching of the Department and also I think I may say to the organisation of farmers for business purposes that the farmers buy manures much more intelligently than they did formerly?—I have no doubt of it.

705. You have done a considerable trade with the co-operative societies in Ireland?—The Irish manufacturers have.

706. Have the trade relations between the co-operative organisations and the manufacturers been satisfactory so far?—They have carried out their contract all right.

The CHAIRMAN.—How are you going to work this in, Sir Horace?

Sir HORACE PROBERT.—I think it is relevant, because it was suggested yesterday in evidence that the co-operative societies had led to an increase in the use of manures and I wanted to get from the higher authority on the sale of manures what the effect of this co-operative organisation has been.

The CHAIRMAN.—I will submit one point—do you think that it is reasonable to ask Mr. Billoe to differentiate between Irish trade and the co-operative society?

707. Sir HORACE PROBERT.—I have not asked that question. I am merely asking about a particular portion of the trade that I am interested in and which I think is very important. I merely want to ask in the trade with this co-operative society increasing in recent years?—The trade in Ireland has been growing at an average rate of about five per cent. per annum. In that increase the sales through the co-operative movement and the sales through merchants have each maintained about their usual increase. There is very little difference in the percentage of increase.

708. What is claimed by the co-operative society is that by negotiations they have effected a very considerable reduction in the cost to the user of these manures and that the manufacturers made certain concessions to them, but at the same time he had to consider other traders. Is that a correct statement?—Of course the fertiliser trade is now conducted on much better business lines than formerly, no doubt largely due to the co-operation movement and the teaching of the Department. The conditions of the country had changed, there was a greater tendency to pay cash and less credit taken. This has enabled manufacturers to make some concessions to buyers.

708. Suggestions have been made, I don't say by very wise people, that amongst the possible ways of assisting the farmers the State might undertake the manufacture of manures. Would you consider that practical or wise?—I wonder would they appoint me manager of it. I believe it is a very good thing to be a servant of the State.

709. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Is it your opinion that owing to the fact that the farmers have an easy means of getting manures analysed and tested through the efforts of the Department's inspectors that has caused an increase of the consumption in regard to artificial manures?—Most emphatically. The Depart-

ment has been the best propagandist in popularising the use of manures and we look on them as very useful in spreading the light.

Mr. McDONNELL.—In the whole rural district we have no organisation to guide us in the use of manures, but there has been a large increase in the use of phosphatic manures, and the only inducement the farmers had was the plots laid down by the Department.

The CHAIRMAN.—I don't want any advertisement of the Department. I am glad to hear what Mr. Milne said; but let it go no further. We will stand on our merits. I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Milne, for your evidence, and so is the Committee.

Mr. J. ATKIN, Secretary, Irish Corn Trade Association, examined.

710. Mr. GOSWELL.—You are Secretary of the Irish Corn Trade Association?—Yes. I am here representing the grain importers.

711. With regard to the supply of oats and wheat in the country can you say generally that the stocks are normal?—I cannot deal with the question of oats, we don't handle it. We deal principally in foreign grain. As regards foreign grain, the visible stocks here are about normal, somewhat under it; but the invisible stocks are practically nil as a result, of course, of the recent Government action.

712. Would you explain what you mean by invisible stock?—Those held by millers, shopkeepers, and actual consumers. You are dealing with the stock held by forty-five million people, which is different from the visible stock that you can see in the store. In the ordinary course of things this is the time that we would be entering into engagements, but owing to the recent action of the Government—we look on it at least as a betrayal—we are standing still when we should be making purchases.

713. Mr. BOYD.—What recent action of the Government?—In the first instance the Government started secretly buying the wheat. They practically took control of the Indian crop. That was done secretly. Gradually the trade widened up to it and they approached the Government and asked them for particulars of what they were doing in purchasing wheat. Because the Government were practically usurping our position. They refused information on the point.

714. Mr. GILL.—Is it the invisible stocks the Government were buying?—The visible. They were acting as merchants. The Government took control practically of the Indian wheat crop and in addition they became, as it were, merchants and bought Plate wheat and wheat from the United States. The trade then approached the Government and said, "What are you going to do about wheat: if you are going to usurp our position as merchants we must stand still." They said, "We will give no information." Merchants bought nothing; accordingly the Government became alarmed and gave an assurance that they would not interfere with our trade. That assurance was broken. The Government at that time put out Indian wheat at 67/- a quarter, and they gradually knocked it down 17/- per quarter.

715. Mr. FULIN.—They acted as buyers on the market?—The Government had secured this wheat, and after they indicated that they intended to hold it they started and slaughtered the prices.

716. The CHAIRMAN.—You may have a very serious grievance against the Government, but I must tell you we have no power to interfere with the Government in any action they take?—I appreciate that. Such a disturbance has been created in wheat that nobody has bought anything, and that has brought about the reduction in stocks. The millers hold no stocks nor the shopkeepers.

717. Mr. BASTARDE.—Does the Government hold wheat in the United Kingdom?—Yes, perhaps two-thirds of the entire wheat in the United Kingdom. They control the Indian crop.

718. Where have the Government got all this wheat?—In different granaries—Liverpool, Birkenhead, and other places. They bought Argentine wheat very largely.

719. The CHAIRMAN.—I understood the Government has stepped in and commandeered the whole thing?—That is not the word, because they pay for it.

720. I hope they bought at a good price?—Yes.

I believe there is a deficit of five million pounds on the transaction.

721. Mr. BARRIE.—When you make a statement of that kind do you give us an authority?—Mr. Asquith said that there were five millions put out against the Government losses in connection with their dealings in wheat. The Government bought some wheat at tremendous prices. We know approximately what they paid for the wheat in India.

722. What was that price?—I cannot give you absolutely the price because they bought it in Indian weight.

723. Has it been declared what that price is?—I cannot answer off hand.

724. You are making a general charge against the Government that they did an uncommercial thing?—Absolutely.

725. The man in the street, by the Government getting hold of the Indian crop, was saved five millions sterling?—What you say is roughly correct. The Government put their hands into their pocket to the extent of five millions for the benefit of the man in the street.

726. The Government purchased all the Indian wheat crop. At the time that was done what was the normal price charged by private speculators in this country?—That I cannot say.

727. You are challenging a Government action and you should be able to show your authority?—I have not come here fortified with the absolute figures.

728. It is an elementary duty of a witness to be able to give proof of his statement?—I came without a knowledge of the particular point on which I was to be questioned, but I can tell you that it is common knowledge that the Government are making a colossal loss on their purchase of wheat.

729. That is again an *ex parte* statement that you can give us no proof of?—How can I prove it?

Mr. GRAY.—I understand the Government paid a price for the wheat which paid the Indian cultivators and owing to the prices at home they were able to sell it at a substantial profit and at the same time save the man in the street at home five millions.

730. The CHAIRMAN.—The Indian wheat crop did not make anyone in this country suffer unless the commercial trade people interested in the wheat trade?—Yes.

731. These are the only people that suffered?—I suppose indirectly everyone suffered as the money has to be provided to make up a loss on the gamble.

732. Mr. BASTARDE.—Is it not so that the Government in fixing the price to take over the Indian crop paid the Indian farmer a price that he never approximated to?—I think he got a good price.

733. He got a good price?—Yes.

734. Is it not a fact that the submergers had run the cost of freight up to 65/- a ton?—Yes.

735. And that the Government said we will pay 20/- and no more and they commandeered all the available supply—is not that so?—As far as my information carries me, your statement is correct.

736. Does not the benefit to the ordinary man in the street justify the action of the Government?—I don't think so.

737. Does your evidence amount to this, that 64/- was a legitimate price for wheat?—How could I name what was a legitimate price?

738. You complained of Government action which has the result of temporarily reducing the price by 10/- a quarter?—That is not altogether right.

739. Mr. BASTARD.—Was not your complaint that the Government by their action reduced your stocks and interfered with your business?—They created a feeling of distrust. When they bought this Italian wheat at about 32— they offered it out at about 31½ a quarter. Subsequently they reduced it 1½ to 1¼ a quarter day by day.

740. Mr. BASTARD.—Did they know it away before the market value?—It is not for me to say what is the market value. What I am trying to bring out is that the price was not controlled by supply and demand. The Government took possession of it and put a certain value on it by offering it at 31½; then they reduced it daily and misled the market.

741. You challenge the Government action for two reasons. First that it had an unsettling effect on the market?—Yes, certainly.

742. And the other, that the policy has been disquieting to the trade, has caused them to retrench, with the result that stocks had been run down?—Yes.

743. How do you support that statement?—By the actual facts.

744. Give us the actual facts. What is the published stock of the public warehouses in Ireland on the 1st of July last and how do these compare with twelve months ago?—The stocks in Dublin as compared with last year are about the same.

745. I will take it as that. Are you not aware that notwithstanding all this disquieting effect of Government action that the stocks in the United Kingdom on the 1st of July show an increase of over 150,000 quarters as compared with last year?—That is a mere bagatelle. The stocks in the United Kingdom are estimated at about ten million quarters, the increase is a mere nothing.

746. You may minimise it as you like, but if your statement was correct that the Government action had this paralysing effect on the merchants, the stocks should have shown a reduction?—This wheat in the United Kingdom is owned practically by the Government.

747. I challenge that statement, and you can give no proof of it?—It is a very difficult thing to prove, but we have gone to considerable trouble in ascertaining the proportion of wheat that is held by the Government, and taking the best authorities we have been informed that practically two-thirds of the wheat in the United Kingdom is owned by the Government. If you take that from what is ordinarily imported by trade you will see the effect of the Government action.

748. Is not the net result that we have a margin more than last year of 150,000 quarters?—As you know, such increase on a two million stock is a bagatelle.

Mr. W. T. WATSON, Managing Director of Messrs. Paul and Vincent, Limited, examined.

749. Mr. GOSNOLD.—You are Managing Director, Mr. Watson, for Paul and Vincent, Limited?—Yes.

750. I think you have been asked to give evidence with regard to slag, and implements, and feeding stuffs?—Yes.

751. Will you give us your opinion about the probable supply of basic slag during the next year?—Our experience is that we can only procure about two-thirds of last year's supply, and the producers have doubts about being able to supply even that. They are careful to put forward safeguards, but they plainly indicate that there will be a considerable reduction in the output, largely on account of the scarcity of labour and the high price of material.

752. Do I understand you are confining your remarks to one particular kind of slag or referring to all kinds?—That was our own experience, and we are perhaps the largest sellers in Ireland. Yesterday I had the opportunity of speaking to two buyers who are in touch with other producers. They told me that they are offered an option to take an equal quantity to that supplied last year, but the makers were not guarantee to supply the full quantity, so that evidently there have grave doubts of being able to supply it.

753. You anticipate that there may be a shortage?—Yes; about one-third to one-fourth I should say of a shortage.

754. The invisible stocks are of greater importance, and they are gradually rising.

755. You only speak for the Association in Ireland?—Only as regards Ireland.

756. You refer to secret purchases by the Government?—Yes.

757. What proof do you offer?—What proof can I offer?

758. Are you aware that that is the mere little tattle of the American speculator?—I disagree.

759. Mr. FLEMING.—The point of view that you put forward is that you resent the interference of the Government to keep wheat at a normal price?—No, sir, it is not. We went to the Government and said, "We cannot continue to purchase if you continue to control the wheat and regulate the price. The ordinary law of supply and demand no longer exists. You are creating false prices."

760. Has not the action of the Government in securing a large supply of wheat within their control prevented the accumulation in these godowns in futures and options raising the price of wheat?—Possibly. But it was the action of the Government that put up prices.

761. You are after complaining of the Government lowering the price?—That was subsequently.

762. Mr. BASTARD.—Your complaint is that the Government did not give you information to enable you to regulate your transactions?—The "information" they gave me was that they would not tell what they were doing. They said, "go and hunt." We did hunt and they did interfere, though they said they would not.

763. Sir HORACE FLEMING.—What is the view of the trade with regard to the efforts of the Department and others to increase the area under wheat in Ireland?—We unhesitatingly favour it.

764. You would strongly favour it?—Yes, we would certainly.

765. You have not discussed the matter amongst yourselves?—Over nine-tenths of our business is in foreign grain.

766. Mr. FLEMING.—So you have no interest in wheat production in Ireland at all?—It is acquired by the local millers.

767. You cannot claim to be a representative of Irish grain?—No.

768. You represent a foreign importing syndicate?—I won't go so far as that.

769. Mr. BASTARD.—You represent a business association working in Ireland?—Yes.

770. Sir HORACE FLEMING.—I understand that the interest you represent would favour increased production?—Well, we would not oppose it.

771. Mr. Mc DONALD.—Is there any exportation of slag to other countries?—Yes, some at present to our Colonies, but there will be no slag coming from the Continent.

772. Is slag manufactured in Ireland?—No.

773. Mr. FLEMING.—Why not?—We would want iron and steel works.

774. Do you think there will be an increase in price?—There has been more than one increase in price since January, but today it is much as it was in the end of April. It is possible owing to increased freight and other changes that there will be a slight increase in the price.

775. You think only a slight increase on the present price?—Yes.

776. You don't expect any alarming increase?—No.

777. Mr. GOSNOLD.—Would not the shortage depend on superphosphates and raw materials?—It would be governed to some extent by that.

778. Do you attribute the increase in price in the Spring to the freight?—We cannot get any shipping company to give any freight beyond September. They will give no undertaking.

779. When you say that you anticipate an increase in price, would that be mainly due to the cost of freight?—It may be, and also to the demand, but I don't expect any considerable increase in price.

778. A supply of superphosphates could take the place of slag?—Yes.

779-80. Is there a shipment of slag from the United Kingdom to the Continent?—I don't think so.

880. What we want to know is would it be necessary to stop the shipping?—I think the question of freights will have a good deal to say to that. The freights are very high.

881. Is there a big shipment from the United Kingdom to our Allies' countries?—I can find that out definitely for you, but I cannot tell you right off.

882. Sir HORACE PLOSKETT.—If £100 worth was loaded in Dublin, about what would the freight be?—It comes from different places and the freight varies. From twelve to fifteen per cent. of the price would be freight.

883. Mr. GOSMAN.—With regard to feeding stuffs, such as linseed, cotton cake, wheat offals, etc., is there likely to be a shortage?—I cannot answer for offals.

884. With regard to cakes, is there likely to be a shortage?—I don't see how there can be a surplus. Unless there is a demand over that of last season there should not be any great shortage. It is hard to answer the question with any degree of certainty because very much depends on labour. The best labour is gone to the front and the labour at present available is not so efficient.

885. Mr. O'NEILL.—Has there been a substantial demand for cake owing to the increased price of cattle?—Yes, beyond the previous year, when we had foot-and-mouth disease. If anything, it was a little higher than it was for the last five or six years.

886. Mr. GOSMAN.—In regard to maize, can you express any opinion?—I don't follow the market closely enough to say anything about maize.

887. With regard to cakes, you don't anticipate that there will be any great shortage in the output?—The tendency would be towards a reduction.

888. Would you anticipate that that would be great?—No. I think many people like ourselves have been proceeding for that by making timely arrangements.

889. So far as Ireland is concerned, you think that the supply would be nearly up to normal?—I should think so.

890. With regard to implements, what is your opinion?—I cannot say much about this except what I heard from the manufacturers. There are many of them rather short of men so that the tendency will be towards a considerable reduction in the supply.

891. Do you anticipate that there will be sufficient machinery to supply the normal requirements of the country in the coming Spring?—I think so. I think we need not look for such a large demand, because the tendency will be for people to curtail their expenditure.

892. Sir HORACE PLOSKETT.—Suppose they increase their tillage?—That would be a question of ploughs

and harrows. The ploughs would be affected, because they are mostly made in the United Kingdom.

893. Mr. GOSMAN.—Would the war and the scarcity of labour affect the supply of large farming implements such as tractors more than the small ones?—Tractors are usually made in the United States and Canada. The number made in the United Kingdom is really small.

894. So that you might estimate that there would be a good supply of tractors?—Yes.

895. Would that apply to reapers and mowing machines?—Yes.

896. Do you fear that there may be a shortage in the small implements such as ploughs and harrows?—It is more likely there than in the other articles.

897. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Is there as much machinery on hands now by the traders as would do Ireland for the next three years?—I don't think so.

898. For two years?—No, I don't think that any merchant is in the habit of carrying stock for more than one season.

899. How many have you in your shop?—I cannot answer that.

900. Mr. DOWD.—Is it a fact that although there may be 80 per cent. less slag that the price will not be increased?—I say that I don't contemplate any great advance. There may be an advance. The causes reducing the output operated since January.

901. Mr. GILL.—The price is now higher than it was last year?—Yes.

902. Mr. GOSMAN.—If other measures went on in price, would not basic slag follow?—That would be the tendency.

903. Mr. O'NEILL.—There has been no substantial increase in the price of feeding stuffs within the last twelve months?—There have been considerable fluctuations in the price, and linseed cake is today 25/- a ton higher than it was in August last year.

904. Mr. GILL.—I understand that the price of feeding stuffs has considerably increased?—Cakes did not advance in price relatively with maize and other things.

905. Mr. O'CONNOR.—With regard to the amount of machinery in hands in Ireland, what is the ordinary life of a mowing machine?—It depends on the number of acres you cut. With ordinary care a machine ought to work for ten years.

906. Mr. SWANN.—A word about oats. You mentioned that the price was 36/- a ton higher than it was before the war broke out?—Then it was immediately after the war broke out in August.

907. How does the August price compare with the July price?—It was higher, but the price last summer was lower than usual. It advanced from 22 1/2 to 42 1/2, a ton from the maximum in August.

908. Did it not reach 43 at one time?—Not from the maximum in August. The price now is 25/- a ton less than it was in March last.

Mr. JAMES ROBERTSON, of Messrs. Hogg and Robertson, examined.

909. Mr. GOSMAN.—You represent the Seed and Nursery Trade Association?—That is so.

910. What is your view with regard to the supply of agricultural seeds—the bulkhead of the supply during the coming season?—By agricultural seed, do you mean generally?

911. I mean wheat, oats, grass seeds, and seeds that are sown for catch-cropping such as rape, rye, soft turneps, and vetches?—Speaking generally of wheat and oats, as far as they are concerned, it looks quite as though there would be an ample supply though some factors may disturb the present prospect. The most of the imported seed oats to this country come from Scotland. Then we have our own crops to fall back on. The Scotch prospect of oats is particularly good, and the crop is very much larger than usual on account of the reduction in the area of barley. It seems clear that so far as wheat is concerned in Scotland—I don't know so much about wheat in England—it is the crop of the year there.

912. You mentioned that in Scotland it was the great crop?—People who know say that it is the crop of the year.

913. And likely to be most successful?—Yes.

914. The proportion of wheat grown in Scotland if it is compared with oats would be small?—Yes.

915. With regard to the supply of wheat, do you anticipate that there will be any difficulty in getting a good supply for autumn use?—No.

916. Even if the crop was greatly increased?—No.

917. Even if it went up by half a million acres?—I should say so. I should think there would be an ample supply for Ireland no matter what increase takes place.

918. What is your opinion of sowing wheat in autumn or in spring?—It is perfectly clear that the longer life you can give the plant in the ground the better the result. Therefore, speaking generally, there is no doubt that autumn sowing is better than sowing in spring.

919. Would there be more risk in spring sowing than autumn?—There is always a risk in spring.

920. The varieties that you sow in autumn, would they be suitable to sow in spring?—That question is too general. There is a great deal of loose talk as to spring and winter wheats. In my view there is commercially no such thing as spring wheats, with one exception: but every variety of wheat, practically speaking, is suitable for sowing in autumn, and some of these are more suitable for sowing in spring than others.

841. Mr. BORN.—You told us very clearly that when you come to the Spring season that there are some varieties which are better than others?—What do you mean by Spring sowing?

842. We were talking of autumn and spring sowings?—It is too vague.

843. You spoke of some varieties being more suitable for spring sowing than others. Would there be any variety of the varieties which are more suitable for spring sowing?—I don't think so. By spring sowing I understood you to mean wheats that will be sown in January and February. Personally I think it is a mistake to advocate generally the sowing of wheat in Ireland later, but I can understand that there may be special reasons why it might be necessary, and perhaps last year it was necessary, that wheat should be sown later than it normally should be; but sowing generally wheat should be sown in the autumn or in January or February.

844. Mr. GORDON.—If ground which was this year in turnips and mangolds was intended to be sown with wheat and the season was wet it might be January or February before the wheat could be sown?—Yes.

845. One variety which could be sown and relied upon to give crop at that time would be Red Fife?—Yes.

846. Do you think it could be sown in this country or Great Britain?—One difficulty, there is, to my mind. A large quantity of Red Fife wheat sown in Scotland, under the name of Red Fife is not Red Fife at all. On the other hand, I don't want to convey that people are doing that with an ulterior object. I have not the least doubt that it is not Red Fife because one can tell it from the samples one has seen.

847. The CHAIRMAN.—When you are giving answers to questions about the quantity of seed that would be available, are you bearing in mind that it is highly probable that the acreage under wheat in England may be very largely increased this year?—I am bearing that in mind. Of course, I said in the beginning that a lot of other factors may enter that I cannot foresee.

848. Mr. GORDON.—Do you know that there are pure stocks of Red Fife?—Yes.

849. Do you think that if those who grow this variety retained all their grain for seed purposes that there would be sufficient of that variety for spring sowings?—That is very difficult to answer.

850. You know there is a desire to dispose of the wheat directly to millers. If it was retained and kept for seed purposes do you imagine that there would be any great scarcity?—I have been thinking over that point. I don't think that the area of true Red Fife wheat in Ireland can possibly be a very large one. There undoubtedly would be a considerable quantity available.

851. You don't anticipate a shortage of seed wheat for this country?—No, I don't.

852. Mr. O'NEILL.—As far as your knowledge enables you to say, is Red Fife a variety of wheat which it would be commercially advisable for the Irish farmer to embark largely in. I am talking about the prospect of the yield?—There can be only one answer to that question. If the average yield of the ordinary varieties of wheat is 30, the average of Red Fife would be 24.

853. That is what we want to bring out—whether it is wise to consider this as a serious element in the development of wheat production in Ireland, and from my own experience I do not think it would be advisable for this Committee or the Department to induce agriculturists to grow this as a variety that is likely to produce the largest food supply. This Committee has in contemplation advising farmers to grow a much larger area of wheat than they have hitherto done. I know that the custom has been invariably with Irish agriculturists to grow wheat on the best quality of land which they occupy and on land which is in the best condition as regards manure and tillage. Obviously if they extend their area they will take into cultivation for the increased wheat supply another portion of their land which is not exactly in the same heart and condition and is not equally suitable for the production of wheat. What I wanted you to consider was what variety of wheat you think it would be most expedient to advise the farmers to sow on this second quality of land?—I should think that for that purpose Square-Head Master would be the best.

854. We hope to induce the Irish farmer to produce wheat on land that has not hitherto produced any and is, therefore, less suitable for the purpose than ordinary land on which wheat is grown, and I want you to help the Committee in stating what, in your view, would be the most suitable variety of wheat to recommend to farmers who would be disposed to increase their tillage?—It is not the question of which is the best wheat, but the best available, and, in my view, the three wheats that ought to be sown throughout the country are Square-Head Master, Queen Wilhelmina, and Stand-Up White. It is a fundamental principle that these wheats must be sown not later than the middle of February.

855. Mr. GORDON.—If it was a case of growing wheat before the middle of February, what varieties would you recommend?—The varieties I have mentioned. It would not be advisable to recommend them where there is late sowing.

856. What would you recommend for late sowing after February?—Red Fife or Red Marvel.

857. Mr. O'NEILL.—Supposing that the Irish farmer decides to plough up some of his pasture land to grow wheat on how would he be the most suitable variety?—I think I would prefer Square-Head Master personally.

858. Mr. BORN.—Would there be a reasonable prospect of success in ploughing up a good lea field to sow wheat in it?—What do you mean by lea?

859. I mean old pastures?—In practice I think it would be better if the shift could be met in some other way—if the old pasture were used for some other cereal and the wheat was sown on the rich land if it was possible.

860. If it were not possible would there be a reasonable return?—There would, but I would not like to recommend it.

861. Mr. DOWD.—We take it that you don't recommend the sowing of wheat in Ireland after the middle of February, but if we want a grain crop that it should be oats?—In my view what are called the winter varieties of wheat, of which some varieties are suitable for sowing in January and February, none of them should be sown after the beginning of February. If you have to sow at the end of February or March the only variety available is Red Fife wheat, and probably Red Marvel.

862. Mr. O'NEILL.—Would it not be more advisable for people breaking up old pasture land to grow oats on such land and for wheat to use land already in tillage?—All the wheat that is grown in England follows grass, but that is only grass of one or two years, but here we come to deal with very old pastures, and I do think it is doubtful as to the wisdom of growing wheat on such land very largely.

863. The CHAIRMAN.—If it were a question of separating the growth of wheat or oats in Ireland which crop would you suggest should be stimulated?—That is very difficult for me to answer right off, because I take it that we are here on the question of food.

864. Being a Scotchman I count oats as food?—So do I. The question is quite clear. The point is that it is the people's food supply that you are mainly concerned with at the moment.

865. Food for both animals and man?—It would appear to me that it would be more desirable to advocate the increase of wheat under present conditions than the increase of oats. One reason is what I said at the beginning—that the area of oats in Great Britain is increasing on account of the decrease in the area of barley.

Your answer is against my own prejudices and views.

867. Mr. GORDON.—With regard to seeds like Italian and Perennial Rye Grass, is there a normal supply of these?—Yes. The position is that the North of Ireland seed will be an average crop. The crop in Scotland is probably under an average crop in area and yield. With regard to Cockfoot and Timothy, the expected supplies will be under an average.

868. What is your opinion about clovers?—This is the most problematical of the whole lot, but the general opinion is that there will be a good English crop of red clover and plenty of seed, and also that the other producing countries will have certainly an average crop.

866. What about Alais?—There will be an average crop.

867. Do we get Timothy from abroad?—Yes. The home supply is small. It will be an average crop.

871. What about rye?—I think the supply will be normal.

872. Rape—would it be normal?—I am afraid not. I am afraid it will be under normal. No one can answer that question definitely at the moment.

873. Have you any view as regards vetches?—The only vetches that are available for winter sowing are English green vetches. They are coming to the cutting point. The prospects are very good. It must be remembered, of course, that the crop may be largely called on from all sources. There may possibly be a considerable export to France, so that one cannot foresee what the price of the vetches will be, but that there will be vetches which under normal conditions would be available for use, there can be no question.

874. If the area under catch crops was increased to any great extent—double or treble—might one anticipate a difficulty in securing seeds for that area?—I don't think so. I think they would be available. It might be at a small increased price. Vetches at the present time are very dear.

875. Mr. O'NEILL.—It would come within the purview of this Committee to make recommendations to the Government if there was a prospect of an insufficient quantity being available for home use to fortify its export?—Yes.

876. Has there been an export of vetch seed from England to France?—I don't think you will do anybody any very great hardship by preventing the exportation of English vetches, and it would be to the advantage of the United Kingdom.

877. Mr. BORN.—Your answer is that you would stop the shipment of vetches?—I don't think you would be doing anyone any harm and probably the farmers of this country good.

878. Mr. BARNES.—Do you think that it would be necessary in order to get a substantial increase in the crop under wheat to give the farmers some inducement by the Government fixing a minimum price?—In my view you will not get an appreciable increase in the crop of wheat throughout Ireland without fixing a minimum price, under certain conditions.

879. Sir HORACE PLUNKET.—Would you say the same for oats?—No.

880. Mr. BARNES.—Do you think that if there was a minimum price for wheat and not for oats there would be a danger of wheat being planted in unsuitable soil?—There is always that danger if you advocate the sowing of wheat.

881. If a minimum price should be made by the Government it would carry with it certain stipulations as to quality and conditions?—Yes. You might not give the minimum price unless the wheat was of a certain quality.

882. Mr. GOSWELL.—With a minimum price do you think the farmer would increase his oats?—The price of oats is 17/8, and if the farmers had any sort of encouragement at all that this price would remain I think it is quite possible that a large increase in the stock may be got.

883. Would not that follow with wheat, too. Is not wheat abnormally high?—It is.

884. If farmers were certain that the prices would continue as at present, I think there is no doubt that there would be an increased acreage sown under both wheat and oats, but the difficulty is to know what the price will be twelve months hence, and if the war had ended it is not probable that the prices would come down?—

The CHAIRMAN.—Before you answer that let me put this question to you. The price of wheat may be taken now as abnormal. That is true also of oats. The Government step in and say we desire the Irish farmer to grow more wheat and oats and they point to the exceedingly good prices that obtain. Before the farmer breaks up his land he will naturally look ahead. He will say that while wheat and oats are at an abnormal price now, that is due to the War. Won't he legitimately say why should I go to the expense of breaking up land to grow wheat and oats when I don't know what the chances are as to price twelve months hence. He may have invested his money in sowing an increased crop and before the wheat is ripe the prices may be down. Do you think that it is fair for the

Government to ask the Irish farmer to take that risk?—I don't think it matters in the least whether they ask him. He won't do it without inducement.

885 Mr. BOWMAN.—Are you projecting yourself one year or three years ahead—can you favour an inducement for one year?—From the farmer's point of view it would be better to have an inducement for three or four years, but on the other hand I don't see how that would be possible.

886. Do you think it is possible to induce the farmer to do it for one year?—I do. I think with a carefully managed scheme it would be possible to get the farmers of this country to grow an increased area or what if you arrange a minimum price.

The CHAIRMAN.—You are not on wheat. I am not on oats.

Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—We combine the two.

887. The CHAIRMAN.—Will you kindly tell me why you think that in a country like Ireland where so little wheat is grown—there must be some cause for Ireland growing oats and not wheat—why you think that preponderant crop should not be subject to a minimum price?—Your question is why should I suggest a minimum price for wheat and not for oats.

888. Yes?—As I said at the beginning I looked from a national point of view on the increase of wheat as exceedingly important and therefore I advocate the fixing of a minimum price for wheat instead of oats.

889. Mr. BORN.—Does not the same apply to oats?—I don't think oats is of equal importance. If you raise the question as to which it is better to have a million quarters of wheat or oats, I say wheat. I am looking at the matter from a national point of view.

890. The CHAIRMAN.—There is a good deal of export of grass seeds from Ireland?—Yes, of Italian and French rye grass.

891. That goes at the present moment to neutral countries. Do you think that any hardship would arise if that export were prohibited?—Yes. I am not talking from a seed man's point of view, but from the point of view of the farmer. It is quite likely if the crop is a large one, which is quite possible, if you stop the export of rye grass or make the restrictions such as will prevent export, I think that the price will come down very much and it will cease to be a profitable crop to the farmer. A great deal of the seed sold by the farmer in the early autumn last year did not pay him.

892. You take the normal export of these places to neutral countries three years ago and you compare it with the export from this country to these neutral countries now you will find that it has tripled and quadrupled. What deduction can the Government draw from that?—I think there is no doubt that a large quantity of the seed which left the North of Ireland last year went through neutral countries to enemy countries. I have no doubt of that, but on the other hand the fact was that in the month of September last year I think I am right in saying that the export was prohibited?

893. Unless by license?—Yes. At a certain period of the autumn the export of rye grass was practically prohibited. The result was that the farmer got 5 for what it normal times he would have got 10, but immediately after that the demand came for this seed from some of our own colonies, a thing that had not happened for many years, and the price went up very largely.

894. I have had the record of the normal trade of three years ago with the neutral countries made out. If that trade has quadrupled the presumption is that that is an enemy trade and we are not disposed to allow it?—That seems reasonable enough. At the same time I would like to again point out that last year there was a point in the rye grass trade when I know of my own knowledge—it only lasted for a very short time—of a man who actually bought several hundred pounds worth at the price that if the worst came to the worst he said would do for feeding.

895. Mr. PRIN.—You said that it was very important that this sowing should take place before a certain time with regard to wheat?—The end of January or the first week of February the sowing should be finished.

896. Mr. GRAY.—There was a large increase in the growing of oats this year. Is it your opinion that

there is an ample supply?—Yes, always assuming that the Government don't come in and take the whole of it.

897. Mr. BOURN.—Supposing the Government did decide to make a minimum price for wheat and oats, what difference would you make between the two?—I have not given the question of oats consideration. I have thought of a possible price for wheat.

898. What would that be?—Twenty-five shillings a barrel. As you have asked me on the question of wheat as to the minimum price I think it is right to point out that there is a slight difficulty that should be kept in mind. There are all through Ireland little patches of wheat grown by small holders, who grow perhaps half an acre for their own use. I don't think that these men should be subsidised for the growing of wheat. I don't think that a man growing half an acre for his own use should be guaranteed a minimum price.

899. Mr. McDONALD.—He won't sell it?—He might sell it.

900. Mr. GORDON.—If the minimum price is so low, that there would be no inducement to sell it?—The minimum price should be fixed for a minimum quantity. I would not give a man a minimum price unless he grew a minimum quantity to be fixed.

901. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—Do you consider it desirable to encourage these small men to grow enough for their own consumption?—I do. I do not necessarily imply they cannot get wheat elsewhere, but it comes in very usefully in the economy of the farm.

902. Have they been doing so in the past?—Yes.

903. Over the whole country?—No.

904. Over a considerable portion?—Yes.

905. Would it be desirable to encourage them all to have a patch of wheat. In the past they all had wheat not only for their own use but for export. Would you agree that they had given it up because the prices had fallen so low that they did not think it worth their while to grow wheat?—I think that is so.

906. At present the farmers are paying 6d. for a 4 lb. loaf instead of 4d., and to save themselves from that enormous price they ought to grow wheat. But the farmer says before the crop comes in the foreign wheat may come in and therefore it is not worth my while to sow wheat. Now do you think it would encourage him if you say if wheat falls so low you can then raise and sell it at 20/- a barrel. Would not that be an inducement to him? I go further still. He has sown the wheat. Would he eat it rather than sell

it at 20/- a barrel?—I would like him to eat it, because I think as a matter of fact that the wheat that he grows is probably better than what he actually buys.

907. What do you say to the inducement I have mentioned—would you object to that inducement?—First of all I don't think this small man requires the inducement, because they are actually doing it.

908. They are not?—Not in large quantities.

909. We have 500,000 tenant farmers, and the very important consideration for this country and also for the Government is to have these 500,000 farmers fed. That is very important in itself?—That is so undoubtedly, but my point is that I would not like to see any inducement held out to the small grower of wheat which would tempt him to sell it instead of using it at home.

910. Would you hold out any inducement to him to have that wheat for his own use?—I don't see how you can.

The CHAIRMAN.—On that point that would be a matter for that much abused person the Statesman to decide.

Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—I quite agree. I don't want him to sell the wheat.

911. Mr. McDONALD.—I understand that you did not advocate the breaking up of old pasture land in this country for the growing of oats?—What I did say was that I think that it would be generally accepted that the breaking up of old pasture land is not as suitable for wheat as for other cereals.

912. With the modern plough, that has a skin coulters and with pasture land suitable for wheat, and top dressed if necessary, would not that land if sown with the winter varieties of wheat give a better return than if sown at the end of February for Spring?—Yes.

913. Mr. GORDON.—You have had a wide experience of agriculture both in England and Scotland?—Yes.

914. And you know the wheat growing districts well in both these countries?—Yes.

915. Is it not the practice there to grow wheat on one or two years old lea as well as manured land?—Absolutely.

916. Have you ever heard of wheat being grown on 20 year old pasture?—I never saw it.

917. In 7 years out of 10 it might be a partial failure?—That is so.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am extremely obliged to you, Mr. Robertson. Your evidence has been most valuable to us.

The Committee then adjourned.

Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

MINUTES OF DELIBERATIVE CONFERENCES. (Condensed.)

FIRST DELIBERATIVE CONFERENCE—TUESDAY, 13TH JULY, 1915.

The Committee met in the College of Science, Upper Merion-street, at 11 a.m.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT WERE:

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., *Chairman.*

Mr. JOHN BAGWELL.
Mr. EDGAR T. BARRIE, D.L., M.P.
Mr. C. F. BASTABLE, M.A., LL.D.
Mr. J. P. BOLAND, M.P.
Mr. ROBERT N. BOND.
Mr. ROBERT DOWNS, J.P.
Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.
Mr. T. P. GILL.
Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc.

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.
Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P.
Mr. HUGH DE P. MONTGOMERY, D.L.
Mr. GEORGE MURTAGHAN, J.P.
Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR.
Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P.
The Right Hon. Sir H. PLUNKETT, D.C.L.,
K.C.V.O.

Mr. E. A. M. MORRIS, M.A., B.L., *Secretary.*

1. The CHAIRMAN.—After consulting as many members of the Committee as was possible, I have come to the conclusion that the proceedings of this Committee should be held in private—that it will not be open to the Press for the time being.

The representatives of the Press having retired.

The CHAIRMAN.—My Lord Bishop and Gentlemen, this is in the first place a Departmental Committee, that is to say it is appointed by the Department, but unlike other Departmental Committees which I have appointed, this one has been appointed at the direct request of the Government. In that it differs from all the Committees with which I have had to deal. I hope the Committee will allow me to say a few words as to the scope of the Inquiry. The terms of reference are extremely precise and clear and I believe it will be possible to bring everything into that reference that ought to be discussed. Now, there are just three things I desire to bring before the Committee before they commence their deliberations. I issued a Return* yesterday to the Press which had been in the hands of the Committee several days earlier; and in passing I would like to say in reference to that Return that I feel extremely grateful to the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary. These Returns are published this year six weeks before the ordinary time owing to the extra solicitude of the police, and in a time of stress and trial as this has been for everybody, I think that is a very creditable performance. Well, now, I wish to ask the Committee to discuss that Return, first of all, commencing with the produce. The crop returns in upon the whole satis-

factory, that is to say, the farmers have not turned a completely deaf ear this year to the request of the Department that more land should be brought under cultivation, but, of course, the increase that has taken place is a very small one compared with what is absolutely necessary. There are three methods which have been suggested to me for dealing with this branch of the Inquiry. The first is compulsion, which I don't like. The second is persuasion, which we have tried up to the present, and which at all events cannot be said to have entirely failed. The third I would like to compress into a phrase that was common in the North of Ireland during the land agitation—Compulsion by inducement, and I am going to command both persuasion and compulsion by inducement to the Committee, and although I have no other person's right I don't think anyone will come forward with a proposal for real compulsion. As I have said, the crop returns are not wholly unsatisfactory. I cannot say that of the cattle figures. They are very disquieting. I think that in a country like this, with so many poor farmers, the fact that eleven thousand breeding cows should have disappeared, with the inevitable loss of something like 100,000 young pigs, is a most disastrous thing for the country. Of course, I know what will be said by way of explanation—that the feeding is expensive—but the real explanation is that big money has been got for the animals. Then the fact that 40,000 milch cows and 7,000 heifers in calf should be gone is another very serious thing for the country. Then when you come to the two year olds and upwards, you find a reduction of over 157,000. The increase of over 50,000 in the one year old is, on the other hand, very satisfactory. Sheep are normal, and there is not much to be said under that head; but I do ask the earnest attention of the Committee to the

* See Vol. I., Report, pp. 2-3.

return. I notice this morning that the Department is blamed for not having intervened earlier. Well, newspapers have a free hand and no responsibility. They little know what the Department has tried to do, but I would like to draw your attention to the fact that there is a Bill at present before Parliament, and if that Bill succeeds, in getting through it will give us largely the powers we desire in the Department. It has been brought under my notice that the Government of the country are in possession of thousands of acres of land—that is the Congested Districts Board. I don't mean large. A very experienced member told me that it was quite possible to do something with the lands that the Congested Districts Board have let for grazing to the small holders. He also pointed out a rather extraordinary thing that the Government which had been calling on the farmers in general to grow more wheat, oats, and potatoes, should not take that advice themselves. I think there is logic in that, if nothing else. These are the three things I want to bring before you at the beginning of the proceedings. Every member will be free to introduce without reserve any subject coming under the Reference. Having discussed the return dealing with produce, I propose that we should adjourn for luncheon at half-past one, resume at a quarter to three, and adjourn for the day at 4 o'clock. That is my suggestion, but it is entirely a matter for yourselves. The next thing I have taken on myself to arrange is that we should meet on four days this week, from to-day up to and including Friday. I thought this would be more convenient than bringing members from a distance to meet only on one day and then adjourn. I communicated with some of the members on that matter and they agreed that it would be more advisable to continue the sittings for a number of days in succession, and that a continuous sitting this week would be an advantage. If you agree, I take it that that matter is settled. That is really all I have to say at this stage of the proceedings. Let us first take up the first branch of the reference—that dealing with tillage, and let us see what we can make out of it.

2. Mr. MONTAGU asked for information regarding the scope of the Bill before the House of Lords.

3. The CHAIRMAN—I have felt that the damage done to the breeding stock of this country required information from the Department and a Conference was arranged between the representatives of the Irish, English, and Scottish Departments. I am sorry to say that we did not find the encouragement we expected. The governing idea that I placed before them through Mr. GILL was that our breeding stock was seriously in danger and that I saw no possibility of dealing with the matter satisfactorily unless discretionary power was given to the Department on this side. They resisted giving any power to the Irish Department to stop exportation. Lord Selborne, the principal member of the Department, after a day's discussion took on more kindly to it and this clause was introduced into the Bill. It is clause (4)—"Prohibit or restrict the movements of cattle out of any area in which the slaughter of such animals is prohibited or restricted." Now we have the power to slaughter, and if that power is accorded by the Department in any area in Ireland we have also power to stop movement. If the Bill does not get through or anything happens sub-section (4) I shall ask the Committee to strengthen the breeding stock of the country.

4. Sir HENRY PARKER.—Don't you think before we discuss any suggestions that we ought to have some interpretation of the Reference. Ought we not to read the Reference and hear from you exactly what you consider to be the scope of our Inquiry. And another point—do you propose to invite evidence, and, if so, upon what points and of what general character. It seems to me that before we deal with suggestions we should have a general understanding as to the general scope of the Inquiry.

5. The CHAIRMAN.—About the terms of Reference. They are as follows:—"The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland have appointed a Departmental Committee to consider and report what steps should be taken by legislation or otherwise for the sole purpose of maintaining and if possible increasing the present production of food in Ireland on the assumption that the war may be prolonged beyond the harvest of 1916." There are two other similar Committees sitting in England and Scotland under

the same Reference for the same purpose. The reference is not any composition. The terms of Reference are clear and precise. As to the interpretation I will draw no hard and fast line and I will give no decision on the Reference which will shut out any discussion which might fairly and reasonably be considered as relevant. That is all I can say.

6. Sir HENRY PARKER.—My name has been published in the Press as representing the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, and naturally I wish the fullest discussion and full evidence upon the part which organised voluntary effort may play in the maintenance and increasing of food production in Ireland, and I presume that it will be quite in order to invite the Agricultural Organisation Society to furnish this Committee with a statement and with any evidence supporting it if they so desire. Let us discuss the matter so that we may clearly understand what we have in our hands. Suppose it were shown that where farmers combine together for the purpose of sale or purchase of agricultural requirements and for the joint acquisition, use, and care of agricultural implements an increase of tillage took place and that tillage was limited where they did not combine, it would be an important matter. It would be important to probe the matter to the uttermost, and under the very restricted terms of the Reference I should like to know whether that would be in order. It is a very important matter, but it may be held to be too far reaching in its import to come within the terms of the Reference. I personally don't take that view, but it is very important to have a ruling upon it.

7. The CHAIRMAN.—I don't think the Reference is at all restricted.

8. Mr. FIELD.—I think it is very wide.

9. The CHAIRMAN.—My view with regard to the evidence is as we go on with our deliberations—we will find out what sort of evidence is required and who should be summoned. The Congested Districts Board is meeting to-day and I have asked their permission for the attendance of their officers as we may require them, if we do require them. So far as I am concerned nothing will be left undone to get the fullest evidence and the fullest discussion.

10. Sir HENRY PARKER.—That is altogether satisfactory.

11. Mr. GILL.—On the matter of suggestions may I say the first question put in the Reference is to consider how to maintain and if possible to increase the food production. The first thing I think we should look at is what is the state of our food production—what is the extent of it, and what are the different forms of it, and, secondly, how far that food production is susceptible of increase. In the first place we should have a general examination as to the state of the food production and get a general idea as to the extent to which it may be improved, and, secondly, what method we ought to adopt to increase it.

12. The CHAIRMAN.—With that I agree generally. My view upon that point is that the returns which have been placed before the Committee, and placed before them in time to enable them to consider them, will give us almost the information we require. I think we ought to go right away to the question of what can be done to increase the acreage under tillage.

13. Mr. FIELD.—I think we may take it for granted—at least I do—without going into any lengthened discussion that the amount of land under tillage in Ireland is not sufficient and therefore it would be only less of time to go into that portion of the subject. What I would suggest is that we should address ourselves to the best way in which we should increase that tillage.

14. The CHAIRMAN.—I would like to ask the Committee whether they consider that this difficulty with regard to tillage in Ireland can be met by persuasion. We tried that last year and it has not failed, I admit, but it is lamentably short. I should like the Committee to face the question by what method can the tillage crops in Ireland be increased? I shut out compulsion. We cannot compel farmers in the present condition of the labour market. I am in favour of inducement.

15. Mr. FIELD.—What would be the nature of the inducement you would offer?

16. The CHAIRMAN.—I had a visit from a representative of the War Office, who have immense powers to

take food. They have power to do it in Ireland and they came to consult the Department in regard to commensurating the necessities and I heard what they had done in England, and the method by which they proceeded was simply this. The answer I gave them was that the Department had no power; "You may take the hay whether the Department like it or no. All I am concerned with is that you will give the farmers a good price, and if you do I don't think you will have any trouble or require any arbitration; the whole thing will depend on the price." Mr. Gordon considered the price offered in England extremely good. What I want to find out is this, the Government have the power to take, and I have come to the conclusion that things are so serious, and the Government look on them as so serious in regard to the supply of foreign goods and the extension of this scheme system may seriously impede the food supply, that I should be prepared to advise the Government to take the whole thing at a fixed price. The fixed price would, of course, be a matter of very serious consideration. The Government came to terms in England for hay, and I think they could also come to terms in Ireland. Farmers would say, "It is all very good for a Committee sitting in Dublin to tell us to break up our land. What now commands a fine price, but what will happen when the Duchies are opened up?" I think the Government are bound to protect the people against that or anything like it, and I throw out the suggestion for discussion that the time has come for seriously considering whether we cannot get away from the old system of supply and demand and say to the farmers, "Extend your tillage as much as possible and we will stand by you."

17. Mr. DOWNS.—The question of price lies at the root of the question of increased tillage.

18. Mr. BAKER.—I have listened with the very deepest interest to the last observation of the Chairman. The shortest way of dealing with the matter is to get down to the question, what inducement you will offer for increased tillage. He suggested the importance of guaranteeing the farmers a remunerative price. If the Government were in a position to consider that, the rest of the way would be comparatively easy for the Committee. The next point was to assist the farmers in getting a suitable class of seed. With regard to hay he expressed opposition to the English system of impressing the hay fixed at a price by the Army Supply Corps as he did not think the Irish farmers would consider the price offered a sufficient inducement. The Government found that the Scottish farmer was more alert than the English one and that he absolutely declined to sell his hay at the price given in England—84/- per ton—with the result that the Government confined their attention to England and secured something like half a million tons. They refused to Scotland later on and the price was then five guineas. They treated the dealer and the farmer alike. The Government only gave the one price to the merchant and the farmer. Personally he would not mind the Department fixing the price, but he would personally object to the English Board fixing an arbitrary price in Ireland. That was what was being done in England and Scotland. There was an huge surplus of hay available on this season's crop in Ireland for export. If the farmers sold large quantities of hay to the Government there would be a danger that they would be themselves without a sufficient supply for the winter months.

19. The CHAIRMAN said he mentioned hay merely for the purpose of showing that the Government had the power of taking.

20. Mr. O'BRIEN.—Said he did not profess to be in touch with the English farmers but he read the English farming papers and he learned from them that for the last six or nine months that the English farmers were very much dissatisfied with the prices at which their hay had been commandeered. It had been distinctly stated that the English farmers had their hay bought at a fixed price of four guineas and that they were obliged to buy hay to supply their own needs at a cost of over five pounds, and he came to the conclusion that if the same rule was applied to this country that it would be immensely unpopular with Irish farmers, who had no experience of having their produce taken from them at a price fixed by an outside body, and it might alienate their sympathy with the Committee in their effort to increase tillage in the country.

It was a matter that required very careful consideration as to whether or not it would be wise for the Army Authorities to come in at the present time and take hay at a fixed price. He also shared Mr. Barrie's view with regard to the effect it would have on the sale of the stock of the country in the winter months. If a fixed price was given at the present time the Irish farmer might be improvident and foolish enough to oversell himself and leave his stock without the necessary provender in the winter, and if that result were accomplished in Ireland the last state of the country might be worse than the first.

21. The CHAIRMAN.—It is quite within our function to pass a resolution that the export of hay from Ireland at the present time is inadvisable.

22. Mr. BAKER.—It seems to me that we want to settle whether we should devote our energy to the increase of tillage first, and what particular part of tillage should we first select. What has been cultivated up to now less than any other crop.

23. The CHAIRMAN.—I think if we go in for a general tillage discussion on wheat, oats, barley, &c., we should get a general idea of the views of the Committee, and the only barrier I put is to have no more discussion on hay until the proper time comes, as I mentioned it merely to show that the Government had power to take the necessities they required.

24. Mr. MORRIS FLEMING.—I think you suggested that we should rule out competition, and perhaps we might all agree on that. Then we come down to your very interesting distinction between persuasion and inducement. We have left persuasion behind at the moment, and we are considering inducement. I agree very strongly with Mr. Barrie. I have the gravest doubt as to whether we ought to entertain the idea of the commandeering of any of our supplies. I have been studying the statistics a great deal, and the one thing that stands out in them is, whereas we have got a slight increase in our dead stock, our live stock has considerably decreased. I think the most important factor in the enormous rise in the price of all bought food, and that makes it more important to conserve and increase the little stock we have for the future, so I don't think we can do better than discuss the second question you put before us as to the methods of persuasion or inducement that should be offered. I think it would be well if the Chairman would get an advanced copy of the report to be issued shortly by the English Committee, who might be considering some sensational scheme of inducement.

25. The CHAIRMAN said he would prefer that the Committee should act on its own responsibility.

26. The Committee next discussed the question as to receive evidence from County Committees, and it was agreed that for the present, instead of bringing members from these Committees personally before the Committee, that they should be asked to reply in writing to a series of questions submitted to them.*

27. Mr. MONTGOMERY said that the farmer could only till as much land as he had manure for, and he suggested that the Board of Works should be asked to advance money to farmers for the provision of shelters for cattle in order to induce the farmers to take better care of their stock in the winter, and to utilise the product for the purpose of making manure to till the land.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that that was a very reasonable suggestion to put before the Government.

29. Mr. O'NEAL said that a more immediate means of dealing with the question raised by Mr. Montgomery was to recommend the utilisation of artificial manure for the production of certain crops which were available. There was a limited supply of certain of the constituents of these manures, and some were not available at the present moment, but at the same time he believed it would be possible for farmers to undertake a different system of husbandry if they were better instructed in the use and value and application of artificial manures. It was a question in regard to which the Irish farmer was particularly backward at the present moment. Mr. Montgomery's scheme of making the manure on the farm would be slow.

30. Mr. FLEMING.—What I want to do is to feed the cattle and put the manure back in the ground, and you can do that by the Scottish system.

31. Mr. O'CONNOR said that the great factor in dealing with the question of increased tillage was to

* See Appendix II.

make stall-feeding pay. Unless it paid, they could not expect the farmer to do much in the matter. The question was to instruct the farmers how to increase their profit and make tillage a greater success. In a great many districts it would be suicidal to ask people to till whose land was unsuitable for the purpose.

32. Mr. McDONALD said that some districts showed a considerable increase at the growth of wheat. If they wanted to keep up the supply of manure they must have straw, and for that they must have corn. If they wanted to keep up the increase in the growth of wheat, and to increase it further, they would have to give facilities for the marketing of it at the remunerative price, or they would have a relapse. He had found wheat a profitable crop at 20/3 a barrel.

33. Mr. BORN suggested that there should be a restriction on the export of artificial manure.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that they had been considering that question of export to neutral countries. They proposed to send an officer of the Department to all the different seed merchants to discover what their normal trade three years ago was with those neutral countries, and to say, "You may do your normal trade, but we shall not conclude that your normal trade has grown enormously since the War."

35. Mr. BORN said that if they were going to break up land with profit the farmer must use artificial manure, and if they allowed any of that manure to go out of the country they would lessen the crops.

36. Mr. BROWN said that there was too much basic slag going out of the country.

37. Mr. GILL said that that was a very pertinent question to consider.

38. Mr. O'NEILL—An agriculturist wrote to me, saying: "I should like to know what guarantee would be given to me if I co-operate with the Government and your Committee to increase my tillage area that my agricultural labourers will be left with me to secure that crop, or what guarantee have I that I will be left to superintend the work and the marketing of the crop."

39. The CHAIRMAN—I will advise the Committee not to answer that question.

40. Sir HONORABLE FRANKLIN said it seemed to him to be the ordinary work of the Department to give instructions to the farmers. He thought it would be very helpful to the Committee if the Department could furnish them with its views as to what the agricultural policy of Ireland in their view should be—what was their view as to the practical way of increasing tillage—and then it would be their duty, if they approved of the Department's policy, to give it all the support they could.

41. Mr. GILL—I think the question of taking evidence ought to be very carefully considered. This is not an ordinary Committee, and is not summoned to consider the general question of agriculture. It has met to consider a war emergency. The Committee consists, almost to a man, of men who have vast experience, and who have deeply thought on the problems that are to be considered here, and who are themselves in a position to give the real evidence that is required; and before we come to the conclusion of asking any witnesses from outside, we ought to exhaust the possibility of evidence around this table.

42. Mr. BOLAND agreed with Mr. GILL, and said that the Committee was more of a deliberative than an inquiring Committee. At the same time, there was some points on which evidence would be required, but on the whole the more they considered themselves a deliberative Committee called to meet an emergency, and to act quickly, the better.

43. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY said that on the question of evidence he largely agreed with Mr. GILL and Mr. BOLAND. They were called for an emergency, and in order to come to a reasonable conclusion, they must not only be farmers who knew what had been going on in Ireland, but they must be statesmen who looked a bit into the future and saw what was going to happen. The first and most important question for any country was the question of food supply. Without food there could be nothing, not even religion. The food supply of these countries came for a great many years from outside, and the object of the Fleet was to protect their merchant service. Now, the submarines had come and endangered free sailing on the surface of the water. Seven vessels had been sunk in three

days off his own shores, and seven thousand tons of wheat, which would maintain a population of about 60,000 persons for twelve months, was sunk. With the advent of submarines the security of the food supplies of these countries had greatly diminished. He remembered wheat-growing for over fifty years, and he referred to the fluctuations in price during that period. Wheat was 52/- and 53/- a barrel in the 'fifties. Those prices went down until they reached 10/- a barrel. It would not be worth anyone's while to grow wheat at that price. The price got up again to 21/- a barrel, and when it did there was a considerable increase in wheat-growing, particularly in Kildare and Carlow. It fell back again to 18/-. Now it has gone up within the last couple of years. It was over 50/- a quarter at the present moment. He thought that persuasion would carry them a long distance in getting people to increase their tillage. He had no objection if they recommended the Government to guarantee a minimum price. Mr. McDONALD told them that wheat paid him at 20/3 a barrel. As long as farmers got 20/- a barrel there was no doubt they would get all the wheat grown they wanted. A barrel was two and a half cwt., so that 20/- a barrel was exactly 1/- a stone, or 8/- a cwt.

44. The CHAIRMAN—Do I understand you to say that, in your judgment, persuasion would go a long way in meeting the difficulty?

45. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY—Yes.

46. The CHAIRMAN—All the members are inclined to believe that persuasion will carry us some way in getting us past our difficulty, but if we saw our way to recommend a minimum price, do you think we would get over our difficulties entirely?

47. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY—I think so, but, of course, we have labour difficulties. There is a very considerable jealousy getting up against the farmers because wages have not increased in most instances. The artisans and their labourers are not getting more, and building work in the country is not very plentiful this year, and all these people have only the same incomes, or smaller incomes. Bread is very dear and feeding stuffs generally, and these people feel it considerably, so while the farmers are thriving, even in a small area like mine, there are a great many people taking the other view, and rant about bread. This Committee has come together to develop ways and means of doing things, and, therefore, I don't agree with Sir Honorable Franklin that the Department ought to put forward a scheme, and that our business is simply to sit down and criticise that scheme.

48. Sir HONORABLE FRANKLIN—My point has been met by the Chairman, who says that he will put Professor Campbell in the chair.

49. Mr. McDONALD said that only for the labour difficulty the prices would do their work in extending tillage.

50. The CHAIRMAN—What might be true of a district such as yours or Mr. Barry's might not be true of the midlands and south of Ireland. People are accustomed to tillage in certain districts, and prices would do everything there, but you have also to deal with districts where tillage is unknown.

51. Mr. GOSSETT said that he thought they could get a considerable increase in the area under wheat and oats, but it was absolutely necessary, in his opinion, that there should be a minimum price. It was not only one year that affected the farmer in breaking up his land. The matter affected him for three or four years.

52. Mr. BORN asked, supposing things came to the worst, and they had to feed themselves, how much land would it be necessary to break up?

53. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY—Six times the present area of wheat. The area under wheat this year is 30,000 acres. Last year it was only 26,000, and you would require 500,000 acres of wheat. We have 500,000 acres of potatoes in the country, so if you had as many acres of wheat in the country as you had of potatoes, you were sure of your bread.

54. Mr. BARRIE—We must look forward to importing a certain proportion of wheat.

55. Mr. BORN—Could the two islands—Ireland and Great Britain—feed themselves.

56. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY—I could not guarantee that you would feed 45,000,000 people.

57. Mr. O'NEILL said that by the improved methods of cultivation which were now extant in this country,

and the use of artificial manures, he was hopeful they would increase the yield of crops by from 15 to 25 per cent.

58. Mr. MONTGOMERY said that it appeared to him to be questionable to lay down how much wheat and oats should be grown, but that each part of the three kingdoms should grow that sort of grain which was most suitable to it. What they had got to do was to see how they could grow the most amount of food.

59. Sir HORACE FLEMING said that he thought they ought to be very careful as to giving out any recommendation based on the immediate market conditions. He thought they had got to consider the general system of cultivation. They would delineate the whole work of the Department if they started growing crops solely with the view of the actual market conditions or of the probable market next year. They could not possibly, no matter what their reference said, exclude from their minds the general agricultural policy of the country. They must look in all agricultural matters at least three or four years ahead. Take the question of machinery. They all wanted the farmers to be equipped with much better machinery than they had at present. He thought machinery was one of the biggest factors in tillage. They could not expect small farmers to equip themselves with machinery which might not be of value to them after 1910. He thought it would be very inadvisable to arrive at any policy until they had heard the experts of the Department and they had given them a proper perspective so that they would see clearly the relative importance of the emergency methods that they recommended to farmers and the general agricultural policy which it was wise for them to pursue.

60. Mr. FLEMING.—This Committee has been appointed for a specific purpose to meet an emergency. At the same time, I quite agree it is impossible to learn out of sight what may happen in after years.

61. Mr. DOWNS.—There is another important matter—the question of raising food for animals other than man. In an Irish point of view that is as essential, and perhaps more so, than the other.

62. The CHAIRMAN.—I take it that it is the unanimous view of the Committee that inducement would be perfectly legitimate in a crisis like this in dealing with the agriculture of the country—that it would be legitimate to apply certain inducements to the farmers to get them to produce more food. That is all I take out of this discussion this morning. As to what should be the inducement, we will discuss that afterwards.

63. Sir HORACE FLEMING.—I think we ought to be extremely careful in coming to a final decision upon economic principle before we have surveyed the whole field of our inquiry. Does this mean that we consider ourselves now in a position to state that no market conditions that now prevail or are likely to prevail in the future would be adequate to induce farmers to grow more food, and that the State, therefore, will have to provide further inducement? I think myself that it is a little dangerous to commit ourselves to a principle like that.

64. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I hold all the Committee is asked to agree to now is that the circumstances are such that we are prepared to favour inducement if it is found necessary.

65. Sir HORACE FLEMING.—I agree with that—"if it is found necessary."

66. The CHAIRMAN.—I take the debate we have had merely as the introduction of a Bill.

The Committee then adjourned for luncheon.

On resuming,

67. The CHAIRMAN said.—I have been considering how we could most profitably occupy this afternoon. I will ask you to consider a question in reference to land in the possession of the Congested Districts Board. I am not referring to what may be described as open and unadorned bog or to the fertilisation of Irish bogs. I rule that out, as it is too far-reaching, and does not come within the scope of our Reference. I am not referring either to lands which have been rented to tenants. The proposal made to me was that we had no right to ask the farmers to produce more out of the land when we have so many thousand acres of our own that we are doing nothing for. The sug-

gestion was that the thousands of acres which the Congested Districts Board have in their possession, which is not bog or vested in tenants, but let for the most part in grazing, should be top-dressed and improved so that its productive power may be increased, and that a great many cattle may be put on it. That is the proposal that I want to submit to you now. It is not my own proposal; it has been made to me. I am going to suggest, in discussing it, whether it would not be one of the cases where evidence would be essential. In my opinion, Sir Henry Dorn might be to be examined.

68. Mr. DOWNS.—I presume that it is out of the Congested Districts Board funds that the expenses should be met.

69. The CHAIRMAN.—They are the owners of the land, and they can make an appeal to the Government for money for the purpose.

70. Mr. DOWNS.—That is a phase of farming that I have a prolonged experience of, and I agree that there is nothing that will bring back money so quickly as the top-dressing of land, especially land that has never been top-dressed before. You may take it that the grazing lands of Connaught are innocent of any treatment. There is no land so susceptible to top-dressing as that sort of land.

(After some further discussion it was agreed that Sir Henry Dorn be asked to give evidence in reference to the proposal.)

71. The CHAIRMAN said that as they still had some time left before the sitting closed, he would ask the Committee to consider the cattle returns. The decline in losses was explained by the War Office necessities, but when they come to cattle he really thought things were serious. On the 1st June, 1914, they had 1,600,723 milk cows, as against 1,548,790 in 1914, showing a reduction of 39,967, or 2.5 per cent. "Of holders in calf, they had 90,139 in 1914, and only 83,369 in 1915, a reduction of 6,770, or 7.5 per cent. I am quite aware, he continued, these cattle figures have been complicated by the recent presence of foot-and-mouth disease, but there is sufficient body in these figures to cause very serious thought. Professor Campbell told me that when these figures came to be discussed that he would advise the Committee to concentrate on two-year-old and upwards and one-year-old and under ten. The reduction in the former is over 127,000, and the latter over 70,000. We have a loss of over 52,000 in the figures for under one year. If you take the whole figures, there is a reduction of 307,850 in the year in the different classes of animals.

72. Mr. FLEMING said that he had invited the Department to get legislation to prevent the export of visibly in-calf heifers. From the humane point of view, it was a cruel thing to kill heifers in calf, and from the point of view of the interest of the country no more suicidal policy could be pursued than to allow animals of that class to be killed. It seemed to him that the English and Scottish farmers had apparently a keener appreciation of what was going to come than the Irish farmers, because they bought more stores, and our people did not realise that if they depleted the supply of breeding stock that it was a very serious matter for the country. How were they going to stop it?

73. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—It is stopped already by the change in the conditions. Next year the country will be crowded with milk cows.

74. Mr. FLEMING.—I think the export of in-calf cattle ought to be stopped.

75. Mr. DOWNS said that it was extremely difficult. If not impossible, for a veterinary officer of the Department at the North Wall to tell in every case whether cattle were in calf or not. He instanced a case where a very experienced man bought a cow from him, and did not know that it had calved three days previously. The best way of dealing with the matter would be to stop the exportation of heifers under a certain age. He knew there were objections to it, but he saw a tremendous difficulty in getting the Department's officials to say which cow was in calf. Of course, there were some cows that there could be no mistake about.

76. Mr. O'CONNOR said that he felt the Department should move very slowly in recommending anything in the nature of stopping any particular class of animals from being exported. At a recent meeting of the Cattle Traders' Association they passed a resolution that cattle were not to be slaughtered when visibly

in-calf. Last year, owing to the foot-and-mouth disease, the price of springers, especially in-calf heifers, went down very low, and when the prices increased for all classes of fat cattle a lot of people, especially in Lincoln, sold their in-calf heifers for beef. That brought this question very much to the front. This thing should be taken very slowly. The price would regulate all these matters. For instance, some years ago a calf dropped in England was sold worth 10/- to 20/-. It was consequently to the advantage of the people to have their cows calving in Ireland, because the value of the calf here was 30/- to 40/- more than in England.

77. **THE CHAIRMAN.**—Both Mr. Murnaghan and Mr. O'Connor have said this will cure itself.

78. **MR. MURTAGHAN.**—Only this one branch of the cattle trade.

79. **MR. BOND** said that in the neighbourhood of Belfast and Cookstown for the last two months fat cattle were selling from 50/- to 60/- a cwt. live weight, and that they had been killing chiefly in-calf heifers in Belfast.

80. **THE CHAIRMAN** said Mr. Cunningham, of Belfast, stated that 800 in-calf cows had been slaughtered in the abattoir in Belfast.

81. **MR. GUNN.**—In England and in Scotland the same tendency to slaughter breeding stock has manifested itself to a very great degree, and in Scotland to such an extent that the farmers find themselves without

the means of replenishing, and this has been brought about by a very important fact. There are now in the new army some three millions of men. These are all being fed by the State on meat. Great numbers of these men are eating more meat now than ever before. This is drawing from the ordinary consumers' market a very large proportion of the ordinary meat supply. That is producing an excessive demand and high prices for cattle, and all the farmers in the three kingdoms are rushing to the market. The situation is just as grave in England and Scotland as here. There is also the additional fact that the French Army is now going in search for meat that they did before, so in these wars the ordinary supplies at home and abroad are being drawn upon in a way that was not known before. One of the things we have to consider is to save the breeding stock of the country. Some measure should be taken to restrict the sale of a certain class of animals. One of these should be cows visibly in calf. In the majority of cases you can tell whether cows are in calf.

82. **MR. O'CONNOR** said he differed from the suggestion of stopping the export of animals of the better class, as it would be unfair to the small farmers who sold them at their surplus stock.

83. **MR. FLEMING.**—What we want to do is to keep them at home.

84. **MR. O'NEILL.**—If you interfere with their export you obviously interfere with their value.

The Committee then adjourned.

SECOND DELIBERATIVE CONFERENCE—WEDNESDAY, 14TH JULY, 1915.

The Committee met in the College of Science, Upper Merion-street, at 11 a.m.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT WERE:—

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., (Chairman).

*MR. JOSEPH BASWELL,
MR. HENRY T. BARRIE, D.L., M.P.
MR. C. F. BASTABLE, M.A., LL.D.
MR. J. F. BOLAND, M.P.
MR. ROBERT N. BOND.
MR. ROBERT DOWNEY, J.P.
MR. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.
MR. T. F. GUNN.
MR. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc.*

*THE MOST REV. DR. KELLY,
MR. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P.
MR. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L.
MR. GEORGE MURNAGHAN, J.P.
MR. JOSEPH O'CONNOR,
MR. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P.
THE RIGHT HON. SIR H. FLEMING, D.C.L.,
K.C.V.O.*

MR. E. A. M. MORRIS, M.A., B.Li., Secretary.

85. **THE CHAIRMAN.**—Since the adjournment of the Committee last evening I have been examining in detail the cattle figures. As you know, they have been issued six weeks ahead of the usual time for the use of this Committee. Accordingly, no adequate opportunity was given for their careful and detailed examination. On the consideration I have now been able to give them, the figures are not so alarming as some of us thought yesterday. The application of the Foot-and-Mouth Order in 1914 has caused a great difficulty in comparing the figures for other years. I mention this now because Mr. Montgomery has given me the queries that he suggests should be sent to the Chairmen of the County Committees of Agriculture.* The first of his questions is with regard to cattle. I think it would be safe not to submit any question with regard to cattle, because the Bill which was before the House of Lords yesterday, and which I think is practically safe, will be quite sufficient for everything we desire to do. The first question in Mr. Montgomery's query is: "How can the alarming diminution of the live stock in Ireland be corrected?"

86. **THE MOST REV. DR. KELLY** said that if the Committee went back over the cattle statistics, as supplied in the returns issued by the Department, they would find as great a difference between one year and another as between 1914 and 1915, even when there was no war. Having shown the fluctuations which had taken place in various years from 1899, His Lordship pointed out that there was 40,000 of a drop in cattle between such recent years as 1908 and 1909.

87. **MR. O'CONNOR** said that there was nothing very alarming about the figures for 1914.

88. **THE CHAIRMAN.**—Before we go any further into the discussion, I would like to ask Mr. Prestice, the Chief of our Veterinary Department, to give his opinion, not as a formal witness, but as a member of the Department.

89. **MR. PRESTICE.**—All I wish to say is that it is very difficult to arrive at a reasonable comparison in the cattle figures by comparing 1914 and 1915, as owing to the foot-and-mouth disease there were restrictions imposed during the period from the 31st January, 1914, to the 7th February, 1914. From the 30th June, 1912, until the 7th February of the following year, 1913, there were also restrictions imposed. Then there was a period of peace, so to speak, during the remainder of 1913, until the 30th January, 1914, when the restrictions were again enforced to the 7th September of that year—a period of nine months. So far as the removal of animals was concerned, that period from the 30th January to the 7th September, 1914, curtailed the movement more than did the previous outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease simply for this reason, that, from the 27th March until the 30th July, 1914, there was a line right across the country, and for a long period nothing could be shipped south of that line, and during that period some cattle and fat cattle could be shipped north of that line, but south no cattle at all.

* See Appendix II.

90. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Have you turned any idea of the numbers of cattle held back from Munster and Connaught during that time?

91. Mr. PRESTON.—I am afraid it would be very hard to give an accurate estimate.

92. Mr. FLEMING.—There can be no doubt about it, enormous numbers of stock must have been held up in Munster and Connaught.

93. Mr. PRESTON.—I have no doubt that a great deal of the stock which in former years would be kept in the country for breeding has been shipped and slaughtered. This refers not only to calf heifers, but cattle that would be kept for the purpose of breeding.

94. Mr. FLEMING.—Our breeding stock has been depleted to an unusual extent.

95. Mr. PRESTON.—There is no question about it, there has been a drain on the breeding stock within the last twelve months that did not arise in any other twelve months.

96. Mr. MONTAGUE.—Is it not altogether due to the increased price of springing cows?

97. Mr. PRESTON.—That is so.

98. The CHAIRMAN.—It does not follow that because the thing pays the farmer that it should be done at the expense of the country.

99. The CHAIRMAN (to Mr. PRESTON).—You have, no doubt, familiarised yourself with the Bill now before the House of Lords?—Yes.

100. You were at the Conference in London?—Yes.

101. You know the object of that Bill is to prevent the slaughter of the breeding stock of the country?—Yes.

102. Assuming that difficulty to exist, are you of opinion that that Bill would be sufficient to enable us to deal with it in this country?—Yes. Under that Bill powers would be given to the Department to make specific regulations.

103. Mr. MONTAGUE.—Are sheep included in the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN.—Yes.

104. Mr. BORN.—How are you going to prevent farmers selling for beef, or, if you do prevent them, do you propose to make up the loss?

105. Mr. PRESTON.—First of all I should say that the number of animals slaughtered in this country is the class that should be kept for breeding purposes is comparatively small.

106. Mr. BORN.—In Belfast it was stated that 300 calf heifers were killed in a week.

107. Mr. PRESTON.—I had the figures from Belfast showing the number of cattle found in calf after slaughter. It has been the custom in this country, and indeed in other countries, for men, especially in the south of Ireland and in the west of Ireland, to leave a bull amongst the cattle. Under ordinary circumstances the cow that is got in calf by this bull would be kept until she calved, and it would be there for the purpose of milk; but owing to the deficiency given to people to sell such cows they sold them, and such cattle went to France and England and other places. This action, however, was due to the extraordinary circumstances and the special demand for meat of all kinds.

108. Mr. BORN.—If that special demand continued?

Mr. PRESTON.—What may occur is this—This Department may get powers to prevent shipment of certain cattle. The number of cattle of the kind that were slaughtered in this country is inconsiderable, as compared with the number that are shipped for slaughter. Therefore, if we are able to hold back at the ports cattle of any description in calf, cattle of any certain age, we are bound to serve the breeding stock in this country.

109. Sir HORACE PRESTON.—Does the Bill take power to stop slaughter in Ireland?

Mr. PRESTON.—Yes.

110. Sir HORACE PRESTON.—Have you heard from the military camps as to what they slaughter?

Mr. PRESTON.—I cannot say.

111-12. Mr. O'CONNOR said that he knew about the Curragh Camp. He had received the form of contract that morning for the next three months' supply, and the daily supply was 2,500 lbs. That showed that the troops would reach about 2,500 lbs. per day for the next three months. The other camps (except Dublin, Kilmork, Athlone, Mullingar, etc.) were on the light side. They were supplied with men; and cows and heifers were not allowed.

113. Mr. BORN.—No matter what the order is, I know the military are buying all the cows they can get for beef, and the soldiers are getting 1 lb. a day.

114. Mr. O'CONNOR said that at the Curragh the cattle were inspected alive, and that the military authorities were very strict about the animals being all cows.

115. Mr. GRILL.—Is it your opinion, Mr. PRESTON, that to save next year's supply of stock we do require to take some steps?

Mr. PRESTON.—Certainly. Practically since the War commenced our inspectors who attend the fairs have had instructions to see the class of animals that were being purchased not only for slaughter in this country, but for export, and their reports go to show that there are a great number of heifers purchased brought from the various fairs, especially in the south and west, for exportation purposes and slaughter that in other years would have remained in the country.

116. The CHAIRMAN.—I repeat the question I have already asked you—do you consider if the Bill that is before the House of Lords gets on the Statute Book the Department would have sufficient power to deal with this difficulty of the depletion of the breeding stock?—I do.

117. Mr. BARNES.—I think we might close the discussion if we had the assurance that it is the intention of the Department to use the powers to be conferred on them under this Bill.

118. Mr. O'CONNOR said that on the 15th May at his County Committee of Agriculture a resolution was passed stating that, in the opinion of the Committee, the time had come for the Department to take steps to promote legislation, having for its object the compulsory registration of bulls. A copy of the resolution was sent to the thirty-two Counties, and the Secretary told him that he had answers from 15. Eight were entirely in favour of it, four marked it "read," and two were opposed to it, and seven did not make any answer at all.

119. The CHAIRMAN.—I must rule that outside the Reference, not that I disagree with you. The Department, as a matter of fact, had a Bill framed for that purpose. So far as I am concerned, the position is now clear, after hearing the discussion which has taken place and the answer given by Mr. PRESTON to the question which I asked him twice in reference to the new Bill.

120. The first query framed by Mr. Montgomery* to the County Committee was altered to read:—

"How can the diminution of the breeding stock in Ireland be counteracted (a) by prohibition of slaughter and export of breeding and immature animals and if such prohibition is recommended, under what circumstances and to what classes of animals should it be applied; (b) by inducements to keep breeding and immature animals in the country?"

121. The CHAIRMAN said the second query suggested by Mr. Montgomery was:—

"How can the substitution of an increased amount of crops be best encouraged, (a) as regards cereals, (b) as regards potatoes, and (c) as regards fodder."

122. Sir HORACE PRESTON.—I feel very strongly that we have got to be very careful that we don't look at the matter from the farmer's point of view only, and that we are bearing out of view the labour question, which, I think, might be made the subject of a separate query to the County Committee.

123. The CHAIRMAN.—No one is more impressed with the importance of the labour question than I am, and I considered very seriously whether I should not have a labour man on the Committee. I found a great difficulty in securing a really useful labour representative, and I had to give up the idea. Undoubtedly, the labour question is an important one, and I have reserved it as a special subject on the agenda.

124. Mr. GRILL.—We all agree that labour is one of the biggest problems that we have to consider in this matter. It would be a mistake, I think, to put a clause about labour into the query.

125. The CHAIRMAN.—I think the discussion may be closed on the understanding that this whole question of labour will be considered later on.

126. Sir HORACE PRESTON said that he had drafted a pro forma letter to the Secretaries of the County Councils, which seemed to him to put the Committee

* See Appendix II.

exactly in the position that they wanted to occupy towards the County Councils.

127. The CHAIRMAN.—There is no question of dealing with County Councils at all. The definite arrangement arrived at yesterday was that the queries be submitted, not to the County Councils, but to the County Committees of Agriculture. If the question of consulting the County Councils comes in, it is another question.

128. Mr. DOWNES and that if they wanted to get information, the best thing to do would be to have a conference of the Chairmen of the County Committees. That would be more desirable than sending out queries to be answered.

129. The CHAIRMAN.—We discussed all that matter yesterday, and agreed that the queries should be sent to the County Committees.

130. Mr. GILL.—There is no reason why there should not be such a Conference as Mr. Downes suggests afterwards, if found necessary.

131. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT said of course that the County Committees could be substituted for County Council in the letter which he had drafted. He read the letter,* which closed by stating that statistics were accompanying it.

132. Mr. McDONALD.—Don't bewilder people with figures.

133. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT said that there would be a General Committee meeting of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society on Tuesday, and he thought at that meeting a memorandum would probably be adopted and sent to the Committee. The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society would also offer to produce certain witnesses in support of the Memorandum. The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society was by far the largest farmers' association in these Islands, and its opinion should be considered seriously. The Memorandum would be concise, and the Society would offer as few witnesses as possible. If the Society did not get an opportunity of giving evidence, they would want to have questions put into the series of queries which the Committee proposed to submit to County Committees throughout Ireland; but he thought it was far better not to do that, because it would raise unnecessary controversy.

134. The CHAIRMAN.—I am prepared to hear the I.A.O.S. within the Reference.

135. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Do you approve of our plan, Mr. Russell, about sending in a Memorandum to the Committee, and examining witnesses in support of it?

136. The CHAIRMAN.—I assent to that, with this limitation, that I am not prepared to hear a dozen witnesses where two or three would do.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Certainly.

137. The CHAIRMAN.—That is the only limitation. Let us be quite clear about the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. We shall, of course, be very glad to receive any document they send, and give it every consideration, and it will be published, but I want to tell you quite clearly, Sir Horace, that the Reference is very concise and very clear, as I said yesterday. If you name a reasonable number of witnesses we shall hear them, that is, so far as I am concerned, but at the same time the evidence must be within the Reference.

138. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I have been long enough, I hope, either in or interested in public life not to tender evidence that is irrelevant. I understand the terms of Reference, and I hope any evidence I associate myself with will be quite within them. Of course, if it is not, the Chairman will rule it out.

139. Mr. BAKER.—How many witnesses do you propose to examine?

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—The outside world be six. I think I could get it down, perhaps, to three. There are certain small farmers that I think the Committee would be glad to hear. I propose to offer one in the chair, and then the Committee would decide whether they would, perhaps, hear similar people from other parts of the country. I think that the Secretary of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society ought to come and give evidence, and also Mr. Witherley.

140. The CHAIRMAN.—Do you propose to introduce Mr. Witherley to give evidence on continuous cropping?

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—If the Committee so desire, yes; but as far as the Organisation Society is concerned, it is on the question of co-operative corner shops, and use of implements that we would be inclined to give evidence.

141. The CHAIRMAN.—Am I to understand that continuous cropping will not be brought before this Committee as a means of developing agriculture?

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Certainly; I think it is one of the most important things we have to discuss.

142. The CHAIRMAN.—I ask you because you have power to produce Mr. Witherley.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I don't want to produce him if the Committee does not want him.

143. The CHAIRMAN.—I shall be extremely sorry if the question of continuous cropping is not brought before this Committee—extremely sorry. I have no power to compel Mr. Witherley to attend, but he can be produced by his employers.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I am personally myself only too anxious to produce him, because I am a pupil of his, and I have profited a good deal by his advice.

144. The CHAIRMAN.—Do I understand, then, that you intend to produce him?

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—Yes, but I would rather he was not included in my co-operative witnesses.

145. Mr. O'CONNOR.—I say that Secretaries ought to be kept out of this, and that the County Committees should be asked for all this information.

146. The CHAIRMAN.—This is a specific question entitled to consideration. Let this gentleman be brought forward now, or let the advocates of continuous cropping for ever afterwards be silent. I understand, Sir Horace, that you will produce a limited number of witnesses, say, three, on behalf of co-operation, and Mr. Witherley or any other witness on behalf of continuous cropping.

147. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I would not like to restrict the number to any definite figure. I assume that the Committee will wish to have the case placed before them fully, though in the shortest possible way. I will go into this matter with the Society on Tuesday next, and we will make a definite offer of evidence and witnesses.

148. The CHAIRMAN.—I agree to hear three witnesses on co-operation, and if at the end the Committee decides more, we shall hear them.

Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I am satisfied. I would like to hear Mr. Witherley on continuous cropping.

149. The CHAIRMAN.—Yes, I am not wanting him in the three witnesses. Now, gentlemen, we will reserve our discussion on these statistics. Sheep do not require any particular attention as there has been no real difficulty about them. We now come to pigs. There may be an explanation of the pig figures as there has been of the cattle figures, but to me it appears that the slaughter of over 11,000 breeding pigs and the enormous consequent loss of young pigs is a very serious thing.

150. Mr. BORN said that people sold the sows and so much because they were offered a low price for them, but because there was an idea that there would be a bad demand for "smokers," and because food pigs were dear. In Ballinacree it was suggested to them that the Department ought to give breeding pigs in various Counties. It was quite understood that this diminution would take place. There were factors which made the breeding and keeping of sows unprofitable. For aught one of 100 to disappear was to be expected.

The CHAIRMAN.—See what that means.

Mr. BORN.—The consequences are serious, but how can you prevent it?

151. Mr. FERRIS.—Would the Swine Fever Regulations have anything to do with the disappearance of the animals?

Mr. BORN.—No.

152. Mr. GERRARD, who had acted as Chairman of the Committee on Pig-breeding in Ireland, said that in their Report they came to the conclusion that the restrictions under the Swine Fever Order and other restrictions had practically nothing to do with the reduction in the number of pigs. It might have had a temporary effect for a few months. He thought the conditions that were affecting the year 1915 were almost exactly similar to the conditions which affected 1912-13—the price of fat pigs was high, the price of breeding stuff was also high, but young pigs were so low in price that farmers sold off their breeding sows. The drop that had taken place in 1915 was serious.

* See Appendix II.

153. Mr. DOWNES.—Is it your opinion that the labour question or the disinclination of our people to feed pigs has anything to do with the reduction?

Mr. GOSSEN.—In practically every county one of the reasons given was the scarcity of labour, but we found that the small farmer who had labour in his own family was the breeder and feeder of pigs, so that the question of labour did not affect the industry to any extent. Probably 75 per cent. of the pig breeders in Ireland are small farmers. The question of disinclination had something to do with the reduction so far as the large farmers were concerned, but not so far as the small farmers were concerned.

154. Mr. DOWNES.—It is mainly a question of food and price.

Mr. GOSSEN.—Yes.

155. Mr. FENN.—Do you think that the decrease will continue?

Mr. GOSSEN.—I think that it will be counteracted. Those who keep breeding sows are getting remunerative prices for young pigs and that will counteract it to some extent, but the high price of feeding stuffs will influence some people.

156. Mr. MURPHY said that the high price of maize was a factor in the reduction.

157. Mr. O'NEILL said that they could restore the balance in pigs in twelve months.

158. Mr. BORN said that it would be a very good thing if the Committee would draw special attention in their Report to the question of raising feeding stuff. The Cigarette, Denmark, English and other experiments had proved that 3½ lbs. of potatoes was equal to 1 lb. maize, that one gallon of milk was almost equal to 2 lbs. maize, and that 5 lbs. of any grain would make 1 lb. of pork. The great point that they wanted to make was that if our people raised an enormous quantity of oats or barley or wheat that they had an almost unlimited market for the product in turning out bacon, because they could not over supply the English market with that article of food.

159. Mr. GOSSEN said that there were only a certain number of farmers that went in for breeding and a great number bought the young pigs. If they could prevent the reduction in the sows they would afterwards be able to get young pigs at a reasonable price. He thought that it was worth the consideration of the Committee whether it would not be advisable to prevent the exportation of all fat sows. He was speaking of breeding sows alone.

160. Mr. BORN said that the price given for pigs now would hasten the raising of sows.

161. The CHAIRMAN said: Your opinion of this decrease is that it is not to be accounted for by the rush to dispose of these sows because the price offered was high?

Mr. BORN.—No, not because the price was high. When the war broke out feeding stuffs went up and the people said that they would not rear the pigs to eat up the foodstuffs for which they would get a high price.

162. The CHAIRMAN.—Are you of opinion also that this is a thing that will right itself in twelve months?

Mr. BORN.—Yes.

163. Mr. O'CONNOR.—The great factor in pig raising is the shortage under potatoes.

164. Mr. BORN said that in regard to prices they were told that there had been a rebel amongst buyers. The price of pigs was affected by their price in the English markets. If the shipping to London from Denmark was heavy, the price might go down 10%, but if it was scarce it might go up by 10%.

165. The CHAIRMAN.—At the same time this is a matter that can be made right in twelve months. If this Bill that is before the House of Lords goes through the pigs will be under the Department's Order and I should be very much inclined to make a recommendation in regard to the raising of food.

166. Mr. FENN.—The profitable rearing of pigs depends to a very large extent on the amount of tillage in the immediate neighbourhood. There is no necessity to import so much maize or oats. We ought to grow our own feeding stuff and let it go back to the land in manure. Pigs could be fed on potatoes or oats or barley or corn. That is a point that ought to be emphasized in our Report.

167. Mr. GUN said that it would be a very good thing if the Committee would call the attention of the farmers to the part of the Pig Committee's Report*

concerning the close relations between the production of potatoes and other crops and the market afforded for these crops through the pigs. It was a very important point to call special attention to that. The question of restricting the export of breeding sows they might, of course, consider specially when they get the replies from the County Committees.

168. Mr. GOSSEN said that it would not be wise to base an increase in the number of pigs on the increase in the area under potatoes for this reason. The Pig Committee's Inquiry showed that so far as the South of Ireland was concerned potatoes were not the staple food for pigs. In Connaught it was the opposite. The area in potatoes would affect the industry in Connaught.

169. The CHAIRMAN.—I think we may pass from this Pig to the question of poultry.

170. Mr. GOSSEN said he had a conversation with Miss Murphy, their Poultry Inspector at the Munster Institute, and she had told him that they might expect a great decrease this year, and her reason for saying so was that the demand for eggs for setting purposes was smaller than it had been in previous years, and that owing to high prices of imported feeding stuff and oats the majority of people had reduced their stock. They also found from the Egg Stations throughout Ireland that fewer eggs were being disposed of, and that station holders had difficulty in earning their rents. They bore out what the figures in the returns showed. He asked Miss Murphy to give the Committee the actual figures showing what the cost was this year to feed poultry since the increase in the price of food stuffs and also to give returns from the poultry station at the Munster Institute. Those figures he had and they would be placed before the Committee.*

171. Mr. BORN said that what applied to pigs also applied a good deal to poultry. In Corkstown after the war started there was a big poultry market there and then a sort of wave of economy came over the people in England. They were not buying poultry and the people found it did not pay to keep poultry, as they did not sell and the price of feeding stuffs was dear. There was no doubt that eggs and poultry within the last six months were paying better. He thought they need not be concerned with the reduction of 33 per cent. in poultry.

172. The CHAIRMAN.—Would it not be advisable to inform these people that although the price of food stuffs had gone up that the price of birds has gone up further.

173. Mr. GOSSEN.—I think a great deal can be done by moral suasion through our instructors and the County Committees.

174. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT said that a good deal might be done also by distributing leaflets in the National schools, and Mr. Boland approved of the idea.

On reckoning after luncheon.

175. The CHAIRMAN.—The next question I propose to ask the Committee to consider is not one directly agricultural, but at the same time it is most intimately connected with the production of food and it cannot be left out of consideration and that is the fish supply. In your papers you will find a return giving the total value of fish landed on the Irish Coast during each of the last five years and the total quantity of fish other than shell fish landed during the same period. Now it can be said that the fish supply has been seriously interfered with by the War and especially by the submarines. Still I have to ask you to look at the fact that there had been a decrease in the industry in Ireland before the War. If you look at the returns you will see that the total value of the fish returned as landed on the Irish coast during each of the last five years is as follows:—

	Shell fish.	Other fish.	Total fish.
	£	£	£
1910.	59,120	316,500	375,620
1911.	58,400	315,679	374,085
1912.	60,691	305,748	367,367
1913.	63,922	294,635	358,547
1914.	47,854	238,655	286,489

* See Note on p. 49.

* Report of the Departmental Committee on Pig Breeding in Ireland, 1915. Cd. 7990.

and the weight of the fish other than shell fish is as follows:—

		cents.
1910,	...	1,641,331
1911,	...	969,484
1912,	...	899,144
1913,	...	676,392
1914,	...	589,900

so there is a very large decline. Our fishery department has been doing everything possible by giving loans for boats and building boat slips to foster the industry, but we cannot do nearly enough, and I think the Committee might make a recommendation on the matter.

176. Mr. BORN asked if it was the scarcity of fish that was responsible for the decline.

The CHAIRMAN.—I never heard of any scarcity of fish.

177. Mr. BORN said that the returns read by the Chairman only dealt with fish landed in Ireland and did not include fish taken off the Irish Coast in English, Scottish, and French trawlers.

178. Mr. FINE said that the fact that foreign trawling vessels and Grimsby boats came within the three miles limit has practically destroyed the breeding grounds and affected the industry. The Department had only one boat to go round the coast and see that these foreign trawlers did not come within the three-miles limit.

179. The CHAIRMAN.—That boat has been commandeered.

180. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY said that the reason of the decline in the quantity of fish taken and sold was to a large extent because fewer people were engaged in the industry. The number engaged in the industry had been going down year after year and the reason was because the price of fish had fallen. The price had gone down to a rather low ebb and the people dropped fishing and took up some other industry, or left the country. The price of fish for the last 2 or 3 years had been working up again, and this particular year the price was very good. He came across the Fishery Inspector in his own diocese and he told him that he had just made out the figures at Baltimore and that this year the marketer in the spring season had brought in £15,000, which was remarkably good. There were years when it had fallen to £3,000 or £4,000, and there had been times when as much as £60,000 had been made. His Lordship's view was that the cheaper kinds of fish were greatly in demand. When the War was over money would be much scarcer than it had been before the War and the cheaper classes of food would be in demand and the higher class would not be so much in demand. There would be a good deal of demand for the cheaper kinds of fish such as mackerel and herrings. The suggestion that be thought the Committee should adopt was—there had been loans made to the fishermen for boats both by the Department of Agriculture and the Congested Districts Board. The fishermen in later years found that they could do much better by fishing with the motor boats than with the ordinary sailing boats. A motor boat fully equipped with nets costs over £1,000. They had a fishery school at Baltimore and they had a boat-building establishment. The fishery school had not capital to run the workshop. They should start with a capital from £50,000 to £100,000. They had not the capital and therefore it was impossible for that business to go on without loans from the Department or the Congested Districts Board. They had about 12 young boat-builders there and some apprentices. Some of them went to the front and some of them joined the Navy, and they were relieving the staff for want of work. They were building a motor boat at present and the history of it was rather interesting. The bottom was torn out of a boat owned by a fisherman from Sherkin Island and it sank in three minutes. They had just got over a portion of the wreckage of the *Indiania* which tore the bottom out of their boat. About two years ago another boat belonging to the same family ran on the rocks. Neither boat was insured. The insurance of a boat was very heavy and took a great deal out of the fisherman's pocket. His Lordship appealed to the Congested Districts Board to try and scrape together enough money to give a

loan to this man and they had done so, and the boat was being built for him in Baltimore. He thought they might recommend that the Department of Agriculture and the Congested Districts Board should be put on hands in order to continue granting loans to fishermen for boats.

181. Mr. BORN.—How many boats would bring in the £15,000 you mentioned?

182. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—70 or 80 boats, both large and small. There is a loan given of £800 and the fishermen repay at the rate of £80 a year. The largest loan is given for 10 years, some are given for less, and then the fishermen pay interest of course. The department that lends has a mortgage on the boat and they also get, as a rule, collateral security of men in the neighbourhood, and on the whole he thought neither the Department nor the Congested Districts Board had much ground for grumbling with regard to getting their money back.

183. Mr. GILL said that the introduction of the motor boat system had revolutionised fishing. With regard to the ordinary sailing fishing boat which had a long life apart from risk and wreckage and which was a good boat after 30 years, fishermen were always ready to give their personal security in addition, and had debts in regard to those boats were practically nil.

184. The CHAIRMAN.—I agree with Dr. Kelly as to the question of loans. The whole question is a question of finance—financing for boats, finance for harbours, finance for boat slips—all money. I consulted the fishery branch of the Department last week. What we find in the Department is that the old sailing boats are gradually going out and motor boats, not necessarily of the larger size, are coming in. We have £31,000 lent on these motor boat loans at the present moment. They are written down as the worst loans we have. That was not the case of the loans for the sailing boats. They were paid up and the loan was only 1 per cent. The repayment of the loan for the motor boats is an entirely different thing. It is a much larger loan. The engine gets worn before the loans are paid, and then you cannot get people to go security for the amount required for a motor boat as readily as you can in the case of a loan for a sailing boat. I don't think the difficulties in the way of loans are insurmountable, and the people who get the loans are certainly not dishonest. The fishing industry has great difficulties to contend with. What we want is more money to devote to loans and for small harbours and boat slips and land slips. We have only £70,000 for the sea fishing and only one boat to police the whole coast. It is a ridiculous sum and I think a very strong case could be made out for a more liberal grant in connection with the fishery industry.

185. Mr. BORN said he did not know what the chances were of getting money. In the West of Kerry they succeeded in getting a number of slips and boats. The real requirement was a motor boat.

186. The CHAIRMAN.—The Government formed this Committee and in asking us to give them the information they require, of course, they knew that all the development of food production could not take place without some expenditure. I think that is the time to let them know the real state of affairs—what can be done and what ought to be done.

187. Mr. FINE said he agreed with all that had been said as to the necessity of money for the purchase of motor boats and the construction of slips and small harbours; if, however, they got the fish landed and the railway charge such an enormous rate that it practically took away all the profits of the fishermen there would be no prosperity in the industry. It has been said in some of the Department's former reports that owing to the want of facilities fishing had been almost abandoned in some centres. He suggested that steps should also be taken for the development of the inland fisheries.

188. The CHAIRMAN.—There is one difference between the sea and the inland fisheries. I don't see how we can deal with the inland fisheries so immediately as we can with the sea fisheries, and I have some difficulty of bringing them within the terms of reference.

189. Mr. BARNES said that there was the same difficulty in regard to the slips and harbours.

190. The CHAIRMAN.—Am I right in saying that the Committee consider the boat slips, piers and harbours outside the reference.

191. Mr. O'NEILL.—I am afraid it would be an elastic interpretation of the reference.

192. Mr. BARNARD.—We have only figures as to the quantity of fish landed in Ireland. The development of steam trawling tends to lessen the quantity of fish landed in this country. Unless we know that the amount of fish caught in the neighbourhood of the Irish coast is less than before it seems to me that we may be beating the air—there may be no shortage at all in these countries.

193. Mr. BARNARD.—I don't think the amount of fish caught off the coast of Ireland is less than it was.

194. Sir HORACE PLAMER.—He doubted whether this question of the fishery industry was sufficiently important in meeting an emergency. He thought that a merely passing reference to it in the Committee's report would be sufficient.

195. Mr. BOLAND said that he would be quite prepared to admit that piers and harbours and slips were outside the terms of reference, but as regards boats, he did not see why they should not all agree to a general recommendation.

196. The Most Rev. Dr. KELL.—We are on the point now of killing the fishing industry, for what has been done for the industry all along has ceased. If you withdraw those boats as they have been actually withdrawn you kill the industry. It is not a time for developing the whole policy of the fishing industry, but we ought to prevent the industry going.

197. Sir HORACE PLAMER.—If we take that as our policy to try to get the boats for the fishing continued I think we all agree on that point, but in our report, when discussing fisheries, we should not give a very prominent position to it.

198. The CHAIRMAN.—I will take it that we all agree that a recommendation should be made with regard to the loan.

199. Mr. GILL said that if they decided that certain of the breeding stock was to be conserved from exportation in the interest of next year's production of food, they would have to consider the question also of keeping back such things as hay. He would like the opinion of the Committee as to whether such a measure as that would be necessary.

200. Mr. DOWNES said that there was fortunately a prospect of a big hay crop in Ireland this year.

201. Mr. GORDON said that he thought the hay crop would be good, but at the same time the first crop hay was short compared with the last 2 or 3 years. The military authorities were at present making arrangements to purchase hay, he understood, on a large scale. What they were purchasing was first seeds hay. The export rose to something like 20,000 tons and the military expected to buy almost 50,000 tons in Ireland. They would buy that hay mainly from the village districts. What he was afraid of was that they would deplete these districts of seeds hay. It was a question for the Committee whether it would be advisable to make an arrangement with the military authorities not to take more than a certain quantity of hay.

202. The CHAIRMAN.—We made a recommendation to the military authorities in regard to young horses and they treated us very fairly.

203. Mr. BORD.—We have 528,000 acres of first crop hay.

204. Mr. McDONALD.—If the military only require 50,000 tons it is very little.

205. Mr. FRANK.—It would be a good thing to have some kind of an understanding with the military.

The Committee then adjourned.

PROFITS OF EGG PRODUCTION.

(See paragraph 170, p. 47.)

The following figures, which have been prepared from carefully kept records at the Munster Institute, Cork, regarding the relative profits from egg production in the two years 1913-14, and 1914-15, are interesting:—

Number of hens to which figures refer	...	500
Average cost of food per head per week, 1913-14 (Oct.—June)	...	about 1½d.
Average cost of food per head per week, 1914-15 (Oct.—June)	...	.. 1½d.
Average price per doz. received for eggs, 1913-14	...	.. 11½d.

206. The CHAIRMAN.—From what they told me they have no desire to do anything that would injure the agricultural interest of the country.

207. Mr. O'CONNOR.—The people would sell the first crop hay in any case in some districts in Ireland.

208. Mr. BORD.—Of the 528,000 acres of first crop hay at least one-fifth is in the north of Ireland, the seed is sown from the majority of these, and the farmers should be warned that it is not to be exported. They should get that warning at once because they will lose their seed if it is not cut now.

209. The CHAIRMAN.—I recognise that it is absolutely necessary to act at once, because several seed merchants have already written to the Department and to the War Committee asking for permits. I know the Government will act very rapidly in giving these permits, and as a principle they will allow nothing to go that will be likely to find its way to an enemy country. I am going to control the sale of seed to neutral countries in as far as it is plain and manifest that it is beyond the normal sale of previous years.

210. Mr. McDONALD said that the up land hay from which this seed was got was cut a fortnight ago in the North.

211. Mr. BARNARD said that as a matter of fact that he did not think there was 5,000 tons of last year's crop of hay left in Ireland to-day. According to statistics they should have had a very high surplus of hay. The Army had taken 14,000 tons out of Ireland, and that led to a scarcity and to the price being rushed up. In face of those figures he thought it was very singular to say that the Government taking 50,000 tons would not have a very disturbing effect.

212. Mr. McDONALD said that in Cork the consumption of hay had been reduced owing to the removal of horses for military purposes and the use of motor cars.

213. The CHAIRMAN.—The most we should be able to do is to find out by official contact with the grain seed merchants, who are nearly all in Ulster, what their trade was with Norway, Sweden, and other neutral countries for the past three or four years. We are sending officers out for this purpose immediately, and they will tell the merchants that they will be very well off if they get through this year their normal trade of the past three or four years; that is the position as it stands at present.

214. Mr. BORD.—It is the duty of the Department to circulate at once the farmers that 75 per cent. of the seed sown in Ireland won't be sold.

215. The CHAIRMAN.—I cannot circulate the farmers in Ireland, but I can let it be known that the Department is in communication with those wholesale seed merchants as to the possibility of their being allowed to export this year.

216. Mr. DOWNES said that 50,000 tons of hay taken by the military could not affect the country.

217. Mr. GILL.—It might, because this would be a new demand on the hay altogether. The only question is whether the disinhibition of consumption referred to by Mr. McDONALD would balance the 50,000 tons required by the military; also if this hay, which was otherwise going to be kept for seed, is saved at once, it will be an extra quantity of hay on the market, so I think we need have no anxiety.

218. Mr. BARNARD.—I don't want a fictitious value given to the crop.

219. The CHAIRMAN.—We are attending to the matter about the seed. We shall devote the whole of to-morrow to the questions of transit and labour.

THIRD DELIBERATIVE CONFERENCE—THURSDAY, 15TH JULY, 1915.

The Committee met in the College of Science, Upper Merrion-street, at 11 a.m.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT WERE:

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., *Chairman*.

Mr. JOHN BAGWELL.
Mr. HUGH T. BARNES, D.L., M.P.
Mr. C. F. BASTABLE, M.A., LL.D.
Mr. J. P. BOLAND, M.P.
Mr. ROBERT N. BOTT.
Mr. ROBERT DOWNEY, J.P.
Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.
Mr. T. P. GILL.
Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc.

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLA.
Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P.
Mr. HUGH DE P. MONTGOMERY, D.L.
Mr. GEORGE MURPHY, J.P.
Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR.
Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P.
The Right Hon. Sir H. PATRICK, B.C.I.,
K.C.V.O.

Mr. E. A. M. MORRIS, M.A., B.L., *Secretary*.

250. The CHAIRMAN.—I would ask the Secretary to read a letter which has reached me this morning from Galway.

The SECRETARY.—The letter is from Mr. John T. H. Miller, Dally's Fort, Salskili, Galway, and he writes:—

"I was glad to see the Government had appointed a Committee to produce foods, etc.

"One question they should look into carefully—the large quantity of whiskey in bond, sufficient to do for five years, and to prohibit the making of whiskey this winter season, and only allow a small brewing of beer and stout. If this were done you will have a vast quantity of grain for cattle, etc., feeding which will be all wanted, and extra whiskey is not wanted.

"P.R.—This would allow great numbers of men to work at munitions, etc."

The CHAIRMAN.—Gentlemen, these are my sentiments.

221. Most Rev. Dr. KELLA said that that was not the first time such a proposal was made. In the autumn of 1865, when the potato crop had been dug and in the pits, it was found that there were little black spots on the potatoes, and there was an alarm in October and November. A meeting was held in November in Dublin, and attended by Daniel O'Connell, who proposed a resolution, which was carried, that brewing and distilling should be stopped. The resolution was not carried into effect, and the people died.

222. The CHAIRMAN said that he was of opinion if the war was very long that the Government would be forced to take action on that line. He thought that the letter should be read for them, but he was not going to submit the question at all to the Committee. He was certain they would come to the proposal if the war went on.

223. Mr. FIELD said he would like to bring under the notice of the Committee the following paragraph which appeared in an American paper:—

"Washington, June 28th.

"The Department of Agriculture have acknowledged that more than one hundred thousand head of beef cattle have already been contracted for in the United States by Great Britain and France. These would be shipped to France, where the French Government will drive them to various supply depots in the rear of the armies now on the frontier, and will slaughter them there as needed. It is impracticable to ship cattle from the Argentine to Europe for slaughter near the scene of action, because of the length of the trip.

224. The CHAIRMAN.—We stopped last night to take the question of transit first. I want to listen to the discussion rather than to take part in it. I am aware of the ordinary talk that is going on—that it takes more to carry a beast from Dublin to Cork than from

Dublin to New York. I know all that—I know what is said, but I know also that the railways are not entirely very free agents. They are under very strict rules, and the Department has intervened repeatedly, and I think always with success. We obliged the Great Southern not long ago not to impose an increased rate by threatening to intervene as we had Parliamentary power to do. We have dealt with the cases that came before us more or less with success, but there are gentlemen here who hold very strong views—what are popularly called traders' views. I should like to hear them, because we have the advantage of having a representative of the Railway on our Committee—Mr. Bagwell. When all is said, I am not quite certain that anything can be done on recommendation within the Reference as to time.

225. Mr. FIELD.—We are in rather a very peculiar position with respect to railways at the present time for this reason—we are not in normal circumstances at all. The railways are practically commandeered by the Government, with the result that if you make any complaint so far as the business with which I am concerned is concerned, they tell you the Government want the lines free. The railways have a valid excuse in a great many cases, but the whole railway system in Ireland, in my opinion, does not come up to the requirements of the trade. Unless I am altogether misinformed, there is a preferential rate for imported goods and a high local rate, and in addition there are superior facilities for exported goods, and, at the same time, the manufacturers in Ireland do not get the service they would get in any other country. I put it very strongly, and of course most of you will regard this well-considered opinion of mine as more or less a kind of heresy or a sort of commercial blasphemy when I say that I believe that if Ireland had never a railway she would be better off, because since the railway regime came in, almost all our manufactures of almost every description have declined. All the small industries, such as tanneries, iron works, and the mills have declined. The commerce of Ireland has, to a large extent, been wiped out. The railway system in Ireland is being used as the engine of destruction of native commerce, except for the exportation of cattle. I see gentlemen smiling, but I am absolutely wedded to that opinion. That does not apply, of course, to a place like Belfast, because you are on the sea line, but take any unfortunate inland town that is dependent on a railway service, and that railway can either make or break that town, and where there is no canal or water competition, the railways charge what they like, and do what they like. Of course, as the Vice-President pointed out to you, we have a certain amount of advisory power.

226. The CHAIRMAN.—No, not the very opposite.

227. Mr. FIELD.—I think you have no mandatory power. It is in consequence of your advice that the Great Southern would not put on the increased rate.

228. The CHAIRMAN.—Let me tell you what our powers are. First of all, if any trader or body of

traders in the country think that the railway companies are doing a thing that they ought not to do, they can complain to the Department. If the Department thinks the traders have made a prima facie case against the company, we can send the matter to the Railway Commissioners, and the whole cost of the proceedings comes from the State. That is more than an advisory power.

229. Mr. FIELD.—Yes, but it is not a mandatory power all the same. Inducement by compulsion would be a very useful thing applied to the Railway Companies as regards loading banks and transit facilities. I think, however, that anything we can do here would be almost useless. What you want is nationalisation, because the Irish railways are under the thumb of the English railways. I believe the railways as at present operated are an impediment to native industry, especially regarding manufactures. I am, of course, looked upon as a faddist, but time will vindicate me.

230. The CHAIRMAN.—I have been thought a faddist myself. You have not made any suggestion as to what should be done within the terms of our Reference.

231. Mr. FIELD.—My suggestion is that the railways ought to get into communication with the various traders in respect of the goods that they handle. I am not altogether a Plunkettite; I don't go so far as Sir Horace so far as co-operation is concerned, because I don't think that co-operation ought to interfere with the traders, but I entirely agree with Sir Horace, where you have small bundles of any kind of produce, an arrangement ought to be made by which they would be brought together and put into the one train. Co-operation in that respect would be useful. I desire co-operation more amongst the consigners than the receivers of the goods. I think, too, our cattle do not receive the amount of attention they ought to get from the railway companies. I think the cattle trains ought never to be shunted except when it is absolutely unavoidable, and there should be no delay. I think our live stock should be treated in the same way as America treats her live stock. There they run cattle trains, and won't allow even the mail trains to interfere with them, and the railway people are obliged to water and feed the cattle. In this country railways sometimes deliver cattle dead and refuse compensation. This may be a very serious charge, but I am able to prove what I say. My suggestion is that there should be more co-operation between the customers of the railways and the railways. The railways, being a monopoly, have the power to impose any terms they think fit on their customers. They are in a totally different position from any other business people in the world. We have no competitive lines in this country. You have only four or five great trunk lines, and within their sphere of influence—within the territory which they absolutely control—they can do anything they like, and, unless you have a competitive water route, the railways practically dictate terms. The railway influence is an enormous thing. You could not drop a paper in the House of Commons but it would alight on the head of a railway man. You really cannot get at the railways. It is almost impossible. The only one cure is nationalisation.

232. The CHAIRMAN.—I won't hear you on nationalisation.

Mr. FIELD.—I would suggest more co-operation and a more friendly spirit between the railways and their customers.

233. The CHAIRMAN said that over and over again complaints had been brought before him by the Cattle Traders' Association regarding the want of sidings for cattle on fair days and the want of trucks. Certainly, the cattle trade had been seriously injured and impeded by the railway companies in these matters. He had official knowledge of these things, and he had been in communication with the railway companies over and over again, and he was always treated by them with the greatest courtesy. There was a very great difficulty in the cattle trade in regard to the two matters he had mentioned—the want of sidings and trucks—and he had taken the liberty of summoning the principal transit officers of the Department, Messrs. Prentice, and McNulty, and Mr. Sydney Smith, their marketing Inspector, to come before the Committee for the purpose of giving evidence.*

234. Mr. O'CONNOR said that after all the complaints that were made, the conclusion those interested in the cattle trade came to a good many years ago was that the only way to solve the difficulty between the traders and the railways was that there should be a compulsory through rate from any place in Ireland to England; that there should be a minimum rate of speed, say, fifteen miles an hour; and that the railways should be liable for any delay beyond that, and for all visible injury to cattle. They were also of opinion that if insurance were made compulsory it could be done at a low rate, and that it should apply on land or sea.

235. Mr. BORN said that on this question and of this crisis it was very fortunate for the Committee that they had Mr. Bagwell there, because they wanted to pull together in this matter. He would recommend the Committee to try and get the railway companies during this crisis to give the best terms to the local traders and producers. By working in that way they might arrive at some good understanding, but they could not recommend that the rate should be changed. None of the railway companies were making extraordinary profits. The Pig Committee had before them in the West of Ireland that there were delays in live stock that meant a serious loss to the buyers. In the interest of the country they should try to get rid of these complaints.

236. The CHAIRMAN.—I think there are legitimate and serious complaints about things being left undone that the railway companies ought to do.

237. Mr. O'CONNOR said that he was a witness on behalf of the Irish Cattle Trade Association at the Railway Rates Conference, and pointed out the necessity for improved accommodation in the way of cattle banks. He made a model of a cattle bank, and produced it to the Committee. They had a case in Kildare where three cattle were killed by the Rosslare Express owing to the fact that the cattle bank was not protected from the railway line. They were obliged to go to law, and the County Court Judge found the Company guilty of negligence, and there was a verdict for the plaintiff. The case was taken to the Assizes, and Judge Dodd affirmed the decision of the County Court Judge. Mr. Prentice, of the Department, very ably assisted them in calling the attention of the Railway Company to the unprotected state of the cattle bank time after time.

238. Mr. BOLAND said that in his part of Kerry they had found by experience that there was a shortage of cattle trucks, and also a shortage of trucks to take the fish away. He would like to know if the railway companies were willing to pool their resources in the way of trucks to meet shortages, or were they to have the railway companies each operating independently for themselves.

239. The CHAIRMAN said that complaints had arisen of the Great Southern with regard to the want of sidings, trucks, and injury to cattle.

Mr. FIELD.—And the want of proper loading banks.

240. Mr. GILL.—All the railway companies in Ireland, practically without exception, have met the Department in all the negotiations we had with them in a satisfactory way within the limits of their restricted opportunities. Whenever it was possible they met us, on behalf of those for whom we were speaking, with consideration. Of course, the transit question is very vital in regard to our inquiry, and the great point for us will be to fasten on the point which, within the next twelve months, will tend to increase facilities in regard to food production. I have no doubt Mr. Bagwell and Mr. McNulty will help us to get on to that part of the question.

241. Mr. FIELD.—Are not all the railway companies in the three kingdoms pooled at the present time. They are all in partnership.

242. The CHAIRMAN.—I know officially that impediments are placed in the way of cattle traders. I am not blaming the railway companies unheeded, but knowing what I do, I believe it would be for the benefit of the cattle trade, and strictly within our limits, if these impediments could be removed. I am not making any charge against the railway companies, except in so far as I have official knowledge.

I should be very much surprised to hear that there had been any great improvement made by the railway company regarding the loading facilities at Burnside Railway Station—a matter which was brought under my notice years ago. I don't know whether Mr. Bagwell can speak for the whole companies or not, but inasmuch as I have a great deal to do with the Great Southern, it may be necessary that the Manager of that Company be heard.

243. Mr. MONTGOMERY said that if there were definite charges made against any railway company on which they might take action, they should certainly hear a representative of that particular railway company. It did not appear to him that the case had arisen yet—that there was a sufficient case before them to prolong the proceedings of the Committee to examine the Manager of the Great Southern. He did not think they had arrived at the time yet to invite a Railway Company to give evidence, and the other Companies might also want to be heard.

244. Mr. BURNES.—As I understand the position, what we want is, how can we make the present railways in Ireland a more efficient machine to serve the country during the period of the War.

245. Sir HORACE PLUNKET said that Mr. Field had suggested that the producers ought to co-operate with the railway companies with a view to bulking and regularising consignments. No better result in regard to transit could come from that Committee than some agreement with the railways that, if the farmers did their part in bulking and regularising their consignments so that they could be carried more cheaply, that the railway companies would respond with lower rates. He looked at the matter naturally from his own special point of view, knowing that it would be an immense aid to him in persuading farmers to join together in marketing their produce if they knew they were getting better transit facilities; that and the cattle facilities seem to him to be the two main heads that came under the Reference as interpreted by Mr. Burnes.

246. Mr. BURNES.—I suppose Mr. Bagwell will reserve his reply until the end of the debate.

Mr. BURNES.—I think with the Chairman's permission that would be the right thing to do.

247. Mr. BORN.—Would it now be well if we knew from Mr. Bagwell if he was in a representative capacity to speak for the railways on this question?

248. The CHAIRMAN.—I did not understand that Mr. Bagwell represented all the railways.

Mr. BORN.—If Mr. Bagwell is in a position to speak for the railways, there would be no necessity to ask for the other managers.

249. The CHAIRMAN.—I don't think it will be necessary to ask the other managers. I don't agree that in regard to the cattle the railways did all that was required. I am speaking officially. I have sent for the file in reference to the Swifted case.

250. Mr. BAGWELL.—My answer to Mr. Boyd's question is this—ex regarding the general question, I am competent to speak for the Irish railways, but with regard to specific cases on other lines outside my own, it is impossible that I could be acquainted with them. I am in touch with the railway world in Ireland, and, of course, it would be perfectly easy for me to bring such facts before the Committee as they feel hear on everyone of these cases.

251. The CHAIRMAN.—By Wednesday next.

Mr. BAGWELL.—Yes, certainly, in the case of railway companies having their headquarters in Dublin, but in the case of railways that have their headquarters a day's post away, it would not be so easy. I propose to deal with their various points in the order in which they were made, or perhaps I will deal with Mr. Field's points first. There were other members of the Committee who intervened, but I will take Mr. Field's right through. First of all, as regards the question of the railways being commandeered by the Government, and that they could not help anything in the way of traders' complaints, as they are occupied by Government work, I wish to say that that does not apply to Irish railways. Our position has not been altered by the War in any way, and such movements of troops and munitions as have had to be done by Irish railways have not amounted to anything like a serious disturbance of the ordinary conduct of business, so that we are in a position really to deal with any

complaint, and to be able to give practically as good facilities now as at any other time. Whether that will continue is another matter, as there may be difficulty in obtaining coal. There is then the question of superior facilities for export trade. No doubt, cases can be found of the local rates being higher than the through rates. That is a very old question, and it is really subject to the ordinary commercial rules—you get a reduction in taking a quantity. It is a good deal that. The question of competition then, to a certain extent, enters into it—that is to say, sometimes a railway company conveys a certain article, or set of articles, at a lower rate than it will agree to convey other articles, perhaps similar articles, under similar circumstances. I think that is quite defensible, because, after all, it would not be expected of a man who sells, say, groceries, to reduce all his profits to the level of the article that he sells at the lowest profit, so there will always be inequalities in rates. Broadly speaking, the rates are regulated by what the traffic will reasonably bear, and if the traffic continues to flow it is a proof that it can bear those rates. As regards the question of commerce in Ireland being wiped out by the railways, I don't think I will enter into that, because naturally we have rather different views on that subject. Mr. Field says that the Irish railways are under the thumbs of the English railways. I can assure him that is not accurate. We do our business in our own way, and have a separate clearing-house, and in very many cases set independently. There must be some communication, as there are through rates, but still we do not independently of the English companies, and there will be a great many cases in which rates for the same articles under similar circumstances are cheaper in Ireland than in England. The suggestion is made that railways should get into closer communication with the various traders they serve. Of course, I take it that Mr. Field, holding the views he does, is the recipient of a great many complaints from people. Of course, he does not get communications from those who are satisfied with the railways, and for the one man who is dissatisfied there are a good many who are perfectly satisfied, I think, only they don't all take the trouble to write letters. I have some such letters in my possession, however.

Mr. FIELD.—Can you give us a few of their letters?

252. Mr. BAGWELL.—Certainly I can. For your private view, I think I shall be able to show you some. As regards getting in touch with the traders, I am forced to speak for one railway to a large extent, but, broadly speaking, what I say will be applicable to other railways as well. I produce a pamphlet issued by my Company (the Great Northern Railway) entitled, "Rules for the Conveyance of Agricultural, Farm and Dairy Produce by Passenger and Goods Trains." There is in it a lot of information regarding rates and conditions as regards one particular branch—the marketing of produce. We have an arrangement for their conveyance to towns to small consignments in boxes by passenger trains. The articles sent in this way include butter, eggs, cheese, flowers, fruit, vegetables, mushrooms, fresh meat, dead poultry, and dead rabbits. More than 85,000 of such boxes were carried last year, and the value of the contents of these boxes sent to Dublin averaged about 15/- per cwt.: the average distance which they were conveyed was about 20 miles, and the rate 5d. per box, including delivery within the urban area. The entire cost of transit, including railway conveyance and delivery, is only 2½ per cent. of the total value, and that is a very low rate. The pamphlet I have referred to has been in existence for some years, and we have also advertisements at our stations, and have made every effort to get into touch with the owners of this particular class of goods.

253. Mr. FIELD.—Have the other railways adopted that?

Mr. BAGWELL.—I cannot say if they have issued their rates in pamphlet form, but there are various rates included in their Time Tables. The next point is that cattle don't get the attention they should, and that the cattle trains ought not to be shunted, and perhaps I may take, at the same time, the question of bank accommodation, as that comes under the same head. Of course, this is a very big question. I can only speak for the transit of cattle as far as I am acquainted with it, and that covers a considerable part of Ireland. Nearly all this cattle business is conducted by special train arrangements, and, of course,

it is the only way that the thing could be done. Special train arrangements are not so easy to work as the regular every-day service, so there is more likelihood of delay in the case of special trains than of others. To take it all round, I should have thought that the speed with which cattle were conveyed from the fairs to the ports was really very fast when you consider how many things have to be considered with. In the district in which my railway serves we contain cattle long distances from the ports, and they are all practically shipped the same night, and if there is delay it is due to special restrictions. I don't say I disagree with these restrictions, because I consider, on the whole, the way in which cattle are detained and rested and fed is a very great improvement, and in the interest of the trade itself as compared with what was going on before. There was a great deal of rushing of cattle before these regulations came into force.

Mr. FLEMING.—I agree.

233. Mr. BAGWELL.—There is none of that now. As to the loading berths, of course that is a question which, I suppose, may be looked upon as a pretty vexed one, because everyone would like to see the particular berth at which they load their cattle equipped in the way of the very best berth. That would be very nice, but the question of money comes in. There are a large number of stations at which cattle are entrained, and the numbers entrained at some stations are small, and the fairs are not held frequently. It is hardly fair to call upon us to fit up all the stations in the elaborate and expensive manner in which the largest stations dealing with greater numbers of cattle are equipped. My Company spent thousands of pounds in Belfast for a new cattle station, which was the result of prolonged negotiations between the Department and the Company.

The CHAIRMAN.—That station is the best in Ireland. Mr. BAGWELL.—It is the best in the British Isles. It is, of course, a very different thing when you have a small station where there are only five or six fairs in the year. I think it is only reasonable, under such circumstances, that traders should put up with very much less accommodation than they would have in larger places where the fairs were bigger and more frequent. Of course, I cannot deal with the cattle that were killed by the Express train, because I know nothing about it.

234. Mr. O'CONNOR said that that accident could have been avoided if, instead of the bank being open to the line, there were a series of gates as in the English cattle banks.

Mr. BAGWELL.—That is not provided on all English railways.

Mr. FLEMING.—It is more general in England than in Ireland.

235. The CHAIRMAN.—The Committee will be surprised when I read for them extracts from the file in reference to the Swinfen complaint.

236. Mr. BAGWELL, continuing, gave statistics showing the prices paid for cattle sent from stations on his line (Navan, Kells, and Enniskillen) to offices in Great Britain in June, 1914, and said they averaged £18 10s. 0d. for fat stock.

237. Mr. O'CONNOR said that that would be a proper average.

238. Mr. BAGWELL.—In June, 1915, that average had risen to £25 15s. 0d. or an increase of 80 per cent. As regards the transit rate from three places (Navan, Kells, and Enniskillen) to Glasgow and Manchester, it is 15/6 and 18/6 per head. That is the through rate. The proportion borne by the transit charge to the market price was 4s and 5 per cent. in June last year, which has fallen to 3s and 3½ per cent. this year owing to the increased price. I think that is a low proportion to the market price.

239. Mr. FIELD.—You don't include the insurance, which means an enormous increase.

Mr. BAGWELL.—No.

240. Mr. FIELD.—That is very material to the transit charge.

Mr. BAGWELL.—It is a thing that cannot be helped. The submarines are the cause of that increase.

241. Mr. BOND.—How much is the rate raised?

Mr. BAGWELL.—It is not raised at all though the price of beef has risen from £18 15s. to £25 15s.

242. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Speak of the year before, when they were 25 less, and take an average over five years.

Everyone knows they are increased owing to the War. That would not constitute any heavier weight for the railway people to carry.

Mr. BAGWELL.—Not a bit; we are under no grievance whatever. I don't wish you to understand that I have any grievance, but I mean to say, whereas the price of cattle is very much higher, our charges are not altered in any way.

243. Mr. BOND.—How do your charges compare with your maximum rate for cattle?

Mr. BAGWELL.—I should have notice of that question.

244. Mr. FLEMING.—I think the maximum rates are charged.

Mr. BAGWELL.—I cannot tell you, there are so many rates. Then there is the question of railways being a monopoly. In a great many cases we are very far from being a monopoly. I can tell you that one-third of the rates on my railway are influenced by water competition. That struck me as very remarkable when I first learned of it. The railway goes from one port to another, and, of course, there is the sea all the way round. Also there is a considerable quantity of canal competition, and another thing that is increasing is motor trucks. That railways are a monopoly in all branches of their business, I venture to dispute. Then there is the question of their being so competitive lines. I can assure Mr. Field that our railway competes very strongly with other railways in respect to certain traffic. We run in competition with the Midland, which is our principal competitor, but we are in competition with other railways, too. Mr. Field has said he is in favour of co-operation and a more friendly spirit between the railways and their customers. There is nothing I would like to see more, but after all you cannot avoid disputes in business in all cases. I think these are all the questions that I made a note of.

245. Mr. FLEMING.—Can you tell us anything about the minimum speed and the rate of insurance?

Mr. BAGWELL.—Mr. O'CONNOR's proposal was in respect of cattle that every beast should be insured—that is to say, that the railway companies should carry at the company's risk in all cases.

246. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Yes, and include the sea journey. We have an insurance rate which gives it to us at 4/3 per cent., and they are insured against death and visible injury from any place in Ireland to any place in England or Scotland. I brought tables and figures to prove that the Insurance Company made a large profit out of our trade. This insurance, if made compulsory, could be done at such a low price that it would be a hardship to nobody. Then the companies should be responsible also for delays outside a minimum rate of speed, say, 15 miles an hour. The delays in Westmeath Fairs have been awful. I know a case where cattle took 27 hours to come from Athy to Dublin by train.

247. Mr. BAKER said that the question of compulsory insurance was a most valuable suggestion. He believed that a very small addition to owner's risk would get over that matter. With regard to the cattle trade in the North of Ireland, he did not think they had yet got what they had in the English railways—spring buffers.

248. Mr. BAGWELL.—I think so. I don't think there are any dead buffers in Ireland. It happens to be one of the things in which Ireland was ahead of England.

Mr. BAKER.—Perhaps I am using the wrong term.

249. Mr. BAGWELL.—I think you mean screw couplings, and if you had to use screw couplings on cattle trucks always I don't deny that it would lead to an easier journey, but you would lose a lot of time at the despatching station.

250. Mr. HENRY FLEMING said he would like to ask Mr. Field how far the bruising of cattle occurred in trains and ships respectively.

Mr. FIELD.—I have been looking into this matter. The transit is very much improved, many blame the railways and not the ships altogether. That may be done not take place so much on the ships. The bruising occurs by the handling of the cattle at the fairs in the first instance, and in the next place in getting them into the trains where there are no V-guides. I think the Northern Railway carries the cattle better than any other railway in Ireland.

271. **Mr. BAKER.**—What we have to ascertain is related to the railways in connection with our inquiry is, how can we make the present railways in Ireland a more efficient machine to serve the country during the period of the War. On that strictly limited issue, we want first of all to suggest to the railway companies to consider if it is not possible to make a better use of the present rolling stock. I will give a concrete illustration of what I am thinking about. We have a little railway in the North of Ireland—the Northern Counties—that we think is a model railway, but even there we have had, with a steadily growing traffic, a chronic scarcity of wagons and numerous complaints from traders. Finally, at the Coleraine Harbour Board the question was discussed publicly. The Railway Agent was consulted, and we discussed the whole matter. He asked if we had any suggestion to offer to the railway, and we said that we were satisfied that at present the rolling stock, if more thoroughly looked after, was sufficient for all the needs of the line. The Manager proposed that he should put two district overseers into two districts, and give them large powers to allocate the rolling stock. That suggestion was approved, and the trouble largely ceased. The result has been that we have run through an exceptionally busy time, and we had our trade conducted without friction or complaint. Another matter is that a good deal of pin-pricking goes on in reference to charges made for demurrage on small traders, and it causes considerable friction, and I don't think the revenue secured by the railway company compensates for that friction. I would suggest that the average time that the wagon after its arrival is used by the trader should be the measure of the demurrage, and give him credit for the number of wagons that he clears on the day of their arrival. I am not making any attacks on railways, but we do realise that the spirit of recent development is to make the railways of Great Britain and Ireland one huge monopoly, and to do away with competition. He mentioned places in the North of Ireland where competition had ceased. To his mind, there was one great defect from the traders' point of view in the Railway and Canal Traffic Act—the clause that gave the railway company the power to reduce the rates to meet water competition. He said that that power had been misused by the railway company. Another thing that was needed was, instead of the present Railway Commissioners, a cheap and easy court to which the traders could bring legitimate grievances. The Derry Harbour Commissioners had a grievance a few years ago, and it cost them £5,000 to bring it before the Railway Commissioners.

Mr. FIELD.—It cost the Dublin Port and Docks Board £4,000.

272. **Mr. BAKER.**—It is out of date, that sort of thing, and I think that all railway companies must consider that we must have as easy a Court of Appeal as regards railway rates as we have in regard to other matters. One thing stands to the credit of the railway companies, and we should give expression to it to-day—that, while labour has increased, while coal must have enormously increased, there has been no attempt by any of the Irish railways to raise their rates. Possibly one explanation is that they have reached the maximum in some cases, but in many cases I know they have not. On the whole, we have little to grumble at in connection with our railway system in Ireland.

273. **THE CHAIRMAN.**—I will now direct your attention to this case at Swinford to which I have referred. So far as cattle is concerned, Swinford is not a small village. It is a very large cattle district. Here is the resolution passed by the Swinford Board of Guardians in December, 1910:—

“Resolved—That we, the Swinford Rural District Council, desire to again draw the attention of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company to the totally inadequate loading facilities provided at the Swinford Railway Station. On recent fair days more than half the pigs had to be loaded away from the loading bank, the people having to get out on the railway track and to load pigs by taking them up in their arms—an arrangement which is not only extremely discreditable to those who are responsible for it, but fraught with very great danger to the public. It is obvious that, under such circumstances, accidents cannot be avoided, and it is a fact

that a life has been already lost owing to the inadequate loading arrangements at this station. The whole thing has now reached the dimensions of a public scandal, and emphatic protests have been made against the existing arrangements by members of the Irish Pig Dealers' Association. We have to point out, for the information of the Railway Company, that the Swinford Pig Fair is one of the very largest in the West of Ireland, while the loading accommodation is not at all as ample as that provided by some other stations on the line.

“The Council, representing the greater portion of the guaranteeing area in respect of the line, we again appeal to the Company to remedy the hazardous state of affairs to which we have drawn attention, and to have sufficient accommodation provided without further delay.

“That copies of this resolution be sent to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, the Board of Trade, Mr. John Dillon, M.P., and Mr. William Field, M.P.”

274. We sent Mr. Reeves, an Inspector of the Department, to Swinford to inquire into the complaint, and this is what he reported:—

“The accommodation at this station is altogether insufficient to enable the transit of animals to be carried out in a humane manner. A large number of pigs were loaded by lifting them from the permanent way into the wagon. This method of loading pigs is decidedly objectionable, as owing to the struggling of the animals and the rough treatment they receive, a large proportion of the carcasses are badly bruised, and serious loss is consequently caused to the Irish pig industry. The condition of the existing loading bank does not admit of thorough cleansing and disinfection after use for animals. There is no means of drainage, and the wall is dry built, falling in places, and does not admit of cleansing and disinfecting. A large number of wagons used for the conveyance of pigs had only been partly cleansed. These trucks had not been scraped or washed with water. Large quantities of droppings had been left on the sides of the vehicles which had been badly lime-washed over.”

Correspondence went on between the Company and the Department, and I was unable to get anything satisfactorily done. I directed the officers of the Department to send to the Castle Law Officers for a legal opinion as to whether the Company were not breaching the law, and the Solicitor-General advised that a prosecution under the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, would entirely fail, and the Attorney-General endorsed that opinion. There was a suggestion in the advice that the matter might be brought before the Railway Commissioners.

275. **Mr. FIELD.**—Was there anything done since.

THE CHAIRMAN.—No, and that is twelve months ago.

276. **Mr. BAKER.**—What sort of answer did the Railway Company give you?

THE CHAIRMAN.—My recollection is that they admitted the unsatisfactory character of the arrangements, but stated they were unable to do any better. The cattle trade is being impeded by this sort of railway arrangement, and I think that is a proper thing for this Committee to take cognizance of. I had also a ghastly case for want of trucks in Thurles brought before me by a deputation. I am perfectly convinced from my official experience that the provision for the cattle trade is insufficient, and that it would be a very great assistance to the cattle trade if the Railway Companies should be made to see their way to remedy these defects. Mr. Bagwell suggested that the accommodation at small railway stations could not be all that was to be desired, but here is a large station. I have given you the circumstances of the Swinford case. I am clear that the cattle trade is impeded by insufficient railway arrangements.

277. **Mr. BAKER** said he would like to know if the railway companies were pooling trucks or acting independently of each other.

Mr. BAGWELL said that when a wagon went from one railway to another and it was fully loaded, it was

not unlooked. It went through, but it had got to come back to the company that owned it. Wagons were not held in common by the companies. If there were a very great emergency in the country, which meant that the traffic on a particular part of the Irish railways was a great deal heavier than usual, an arrangement, no doubt, would be made as a mere matter of business to lend that particular railway wagon belonging to another company, but this state of affairs did not exist at the present time. He thought that the Great Southern, owing to the fact that the great majority of the military stations were on their line, had more of that kind of business to deal with.

278. Mr. BOLAND.—I mean pooling to utilize trucks.
Mr. BAGWELL.—That would be done if the necessity arose.

279. Mr. O'NEILL.—Does that custom obtain in England?

Mr. BAGWELL.—It does, and it does not.

280. Mr. BOLAND.—It does seem to me that an emergency might arise in which there would be congestion in one district, and it might be extremely valuable if the railway companies were able, at a moment's notice, to facilitate the passage of trucks.

Mr. BAGWELL.—Of course, that would be done.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I understood from the letter you read from the Law Officers that a prosecution would not apply, but that the case could be brought before the Railway Commissioners.

The CHAIRMAN.—I did not ask the Railway Commissioners to intervene, because everybody knows if you bring yourselves before the Railway Commissioners it means thousands of pounds.

The CHAIRMAN.—With regard to the Thistles case, it is one of the worst cases I have ever heard of.

Mr. BARRIE.—Both cases concern the same railway company.

The CHAIRMAN.—Yes. I have already arranged that our Inspector should come here on Wednesday.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—It seems to me that if the statement you have made now is going into print, and is to be published in any form, we are bound to hear the Company; otherwise I think we ought to take your statement as an illustration of what you tell us is going on, and no one will be any the wiser.

Mr. O'NEILL.—I wish to hear testimony to the Department's interest in the live stock traffic on the Great Southern, and the special attention given by their Inspector, Mr. Barrie.

281. Mr. BAGWELL.—Certain cases of neglect of duty by railway companies have been mentioned. I rather gather from the general tenor of your remarks that you think these are typical of the general conduct of their business by Irish railways.

The CHAIRMAN.—No, I don't say that.

282. Mr. BAGWELL.—If you take evidence as to bad cases he knows, of failure on the part of railway companies to adequately discharge their obligations, you will have to bear what other railway concerns have got to say.

283. Mr. GUN.—I think that should be determined by the question whether there is anything to go before the Committee that would be harmful to the railway companies, but if this discussion is going to lead to some representation which the railway companies can comply with to help the increase of food production during the next twelve months, then I don't think there would be any occasion to have officials appointed by the railway companies to give evidence. You cannot start the railway question without starting what may become quite interminable, and once you attempt to have evidence from the railway companies we will be away from the terms of reference. We are here as a War Emergency Committee to see how, within the shortest space of time, we can do something to increase the food production of 1915. I have been wondering what we could get from the railway companies and other carrying companies that could help us, and what I would like to put to them is that they should think what exactly are the ways in

which they can help us to give a push forward to the problem of food. I don't think the question raised is at all relevant here unless it be in some form such as the form in which the minimum price comes in—in some form in which you would provide an encouragement to the food producers to do more than they do. In that way the rate question might come in, and the suggestion might be made that the Government should give a bonus to the railway companies to lower their rates to facilitate the farmers in producing more food.

284. The CHAIRMAN.—I have already said I am going to submit Mr. Sydney Smith,* who is our marketing agent in England, before we come to any final decision, and perhaps, Mr. Premier would be able to give us assistance also; but the net point to which I have confined myself is the question of whether or not the present railway arrangements for the transit of cattle from the stations to the ports in Ireland are not of such a character as to impede the cattle trade instead of promoting it. That is the net question I have raised. Other questions have been raised, some of which are outside the Reference. I hope no one thinks, least of all Mr. Bagwell, that I am attacking the railway companies. I am referring to complaints which I have been forced to consider in the Department. All I have suggested to the Committee to-day is that we should hear Mr. Sydney Smith, and, if, after his evidence, any member thinks it necessary to send for anyone else to be examined, I am entirely agreeable, because I am clearly of opinion that a railway company should not be attacked, as it were, without having the right to come and answer that attack. That is where I stand, and I am not discussing railway rates or anything else, but I am persuaded that we should get facilities for the cattle trade if our report makes good that that trade is impeded by railway companies who duty it is to promote it. That is where I stand. The attack in this case on the railway company is on the files in the Department.

285. Mr. BAGWELL.—If the Committee contemplate animadverting on the Irish railways as a whole, I suggest that the Committee should hear everyone concerned, which would be a very big thing, because I am not prepared to answer all questions.

286. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—As I understand the matter, we can arrive at what we aim at without any animadversion on the railway companies whatever. We are dealing with an emergency, and we want to improve the food supply. Without making any animadversion, we should consider whether, with the assistance of Mr. Bagwell and the goodwill of the railway companies, we might not make suggestions for certain changes and certain improvements, and leave out the moot question, whether in the past things were wrong or not. Mr. Barrie made a suggestion which, I think, is very valuable. I don't think the railways themselves would deny that at large country fairs occasionally they are short, but I don't think we, as a Committee, need pass any censure on them, but we might try to make provision that that would not occur during the War. Mr. Barrie told us how they regulated matters in the Northern Counties line, and how wagons were properly utilised and applied. We might be able to get the railway companies to do something with regard to what Mr. Barrie has suggested.

287. Mr. BAGWELL.—As being the only railway representative present, I would like to assure the Committee that I don't object to any criticism; but I do think that, if the Committee are going to deal with certain specific complaints dealing with the worse cases, that they should hear these railway companies in their own defence. I think that is quite right. I will not deny for a moment that, on many railways, and indeed on every railway, there are times when the supply is not adequate, and times when traffic is subject to delay, but the whole question is one of evenness of flow. The wagons do carry the traffic in the long run, but it might not be so promptly carried as it ought to be. Things cannot be done always to everyone's satisfaction. It is the railway's interest to get the traffic away as soon as possible, but it is very difficult to meet all cases. The point has been raised that in time of war there should be ample supplies of wagons to carry food. Railway shops have been called upon to do

* See pp. 8-10.

† See pp. 1-8.

government work. Representations have been sent to us as to how many of our men can do munition work. I think it is obvious that, if the railway companies were called upon by the supreme authority to do Government work, that they ought to do that work instead of constructing wagons, no matter how badly they are wanted. One big railway company in this country has deferred the construction of a large number of wagons solely on that account.

288. **Sir HENRY PARSONS.**—If the railway companies feel that these specific questions taken along give the public an unfair view of their general conduct on the matter of transport, I think we are bound to allow them to show what they are trying to do to serve the public.

289. **Most Hon. Dr. NEALE.**—The question will arise how far these cases will be published.

290. **The CHAIRMAN.**—I think it is possible that the publication of the evidence will be called for.

291. **Mr. GILL.**—One report will not resolve itself into a condemnation of what the railway companies did in the past, but may contain suggestions as to what they might do during the War in connection with food production. If we heard our Inspectors we might not require further evidence.

This closed the discussion on itself, and the Committee adjourned for business.

On standing after business.

292. **The CHAIRMAN said:**—We will now proceed to discuss the labour problem.

Mr. GILL.—Perhaps Mr. O'Neill would give us his view.

293. **Mr. O'NEILL.**—I really think this is a matter that requires to be dealt with in a very definite fashion, because the conditions obtaining in different districts are essentially different, and the needs of one place are so different from those of another, that any attempt to generalize would probably be a failure. I happen to have resided in a district where there was acute labour trouble within the last couple of years, and I am glad to say that matters have subsided, and that the relations between the employers and the employed are now better than one could have hoped for at the time those troubles were acute. But one is always guided by experience, and having once seen how easy it is to induce these people to follow the lead of a man who may have objects other than the advancement of the labour interest in view, and how difficult it is to get labourers to understand that there may be something ulterior underneath the specious arguments that are put forward by labour leaders, one is always afraid that the advent of a designing individual into a neighbourhood may at any time and at very short notice disturb the relations between farmer and labourer. I do think, therefore, that a Committee of this kind should be very slow to deal with this question in a general fashion, because circumstances are so different, as I have stated, in different localities, and the needs of each locality also are so different, and where relations at the present time are fairly amicable, and where there is no grave sense of complaint as to scarcity of labour, I think that any interference on the part of outsiders would be distinctly ill-advised, and would not tend to induce employers of labour to look with favour on proposals that would seem to dictate to them what to do in the control and management of their own business. So far as Dublin is concerned I do not think there is any reason to say that the labour question is a serious factor with regard to the question of cultivation, or the extension of cultivation. If the farmers thought it wise to extend their tillage, there is nothing in the labour problem to forbid them doing so. Of course, they are always apprehensive that the conditions prevailing to-day may not continue for another harvest, and that they may be face to face with difficulties three months hence which it is impossible for them to foresee at the present time; but at the same time I think it is wise that this Committee should leave each district to look after its own interest, and I do not think that any advice or assistance that this Committee could give them in the Report would be in the slightest degree helpful to them, because it would be impossible to embrace in a general report

any scheme that would be applicable even to our country, much less to the thirty-two counties of Ireland, and for that reason I would not be in favour of giving a very prominent place in the Report to any reference to the labour problem. I am quite satisfied that you probably will have, from County Committees in other counties than my own, references to this question, and I dare say that it is impossible for us to carry out increased cultivation or tillage unless some guarantee is given that labourers will be available for the purpose. That idea prevails a good deal throughout the country, and I am confronted constantly with the statement, "It is impossible for us to carry on tillage, because there are no labourers in the district." I am honestly convinced that, where there is no labour in a district, it is not due exclusively to the labourer, but a good deal of the responsibility rests with the employers themselves. Where labour is not continuous, the labourer will not continue to live. He cannot support his family if he is only to be employed on days that are shining, and to remain at home in an empty, fireless cottage on a rainy day. A great many people seem to think that the labourer is a person who ought to be always at their beck and call on the particular day and hour at which they happen to need his services, and they never think that the man has to provide for his wife and family during the frost and snow, when it is inconvenient to employ him, as well as in the summer of summer. In the districts and counties where agriculture has been persistently followed, there the labourer and his family have continued to live, and where labour is available. There is the further question that it is not alone the employment of the man himself and his wife, but it is also the question of the employment of his children. It is an enormous advantage to a rural labourer to have the earnings of his children accumulating at this time to provide them with clothes in the winter. It is because of the difference of the systems and relations prevailing in the different districts that I think it is impossible for any central authority to dogmatize on this particular question, and each locality must work out its own salvation, and make the best provision it can for dealing with the labour problem. Some people will say, "If we embark on tillage and break up our land, which is at present fairly productive owing to the good price of cattle, what guarantee have we that we will have the labour to husband and reap our produce?" That, of course, is a difficulty that exists in those districts where the labour has been driven out. I use the expression "driven out" advisedly, because it has been driven out by the scarcity of employment and its want of continuity. I do not think it is necessary for me to say any more. I have endeavoured to point out the way this question presents itself to me.

294. **The CHAIRMAN.**—When you refer to children, what are would they work for?

Mr. O'NEILL.—From ten years, gathering potatoes.

295. **The CHAIRMAN.**—You have given your opinion, Mr. O'Neill, of the County of Dublin, and said that labour, as a rule, can be had for agricultural purposes. Would the contingency to the city have any effect on the conditions in the country?

Mr. O'NEILL.—The migration of labour from the country to the city has been considerably arrested by the granting of cottages and plots to the labourers. That has been a great factor in providing labour in tillage districts. These labourers get the help of horses from their employers to work their plots, and to cart manure and produce, and some of them I have known to make as much as £10 out of their garden plots. That is a very considerable factor in arresting the migration of agricultural labourers to the city to take up work, for which they would get a larger weekly wage, which, however, would be absorbed in the payment of house rent, and in the increased cost which they would be put to in providing firing and other necessities, many of which are procurable in the country at a cheaper rate, and some for nothing at all.

296. **The CHAIRMAN.**—In the harvest time, for example, if you required more labour, would you get any assistance from the city?

Mr. O'NEILL.—No, and the city labourer is practically useless for farm purposes. I would say that the tendency of the agricultural labourer to leave farm life and go into the city has been considerably arrested owing to the cause I have mentioned. I believe there could be a very considerable increase in food produc-

tion without any material increase in the cost of labour.

257. Mr. FIELD said that his experience was that city labourers did not like to go to the country at all. The fact that the agricultural labourers had obtained cottages and plots of land was a great means of holding them in the rural districts, but it was very difficult to get them to go from a city or town into the country on week.

258. Mr. O'NEILL.—There has been a good deal of complaint made from time to time about the quality of the labour. People say labourers are less industrious and not so well inclined to work as they used to be. I do not quite share that view. I believe that they are as well inclined to work and as industrious now as ever. There is one change that has taken place—within the last ten or fifteen years the labourers desire more recreation than they did previously, and I don't blame them for it. They go to some place of amusement on Sunday or Saturday night. I think they are entitled to some leisure, and the farmer doesn't object to give them a day off now and then. The relations between the farmer and the labourer are of a very friendly character, and the men take as much interest in their work, and are as industrious as ever they were, and so long as you find that spirit prevailing between the labourer and the farmer, you will be likely to have the best results for the country and for agriculture generally.

259. The CHAIRMAN.—What is the rate of wages in County Dublin?

Mr. O'NEILL.—From 15/- to 18/- for ordinary men, and the carters or horsemen would probably be worth on an average from 22/- to 24/-. Where the labourers live in the employer's cottage they have a free house, a garden, coal, and milk very often.

260. Mr. GILL.—Those would be in addition to the wages you have mentioned?

Mr. O'NEILL.—Some of them would be over and above, and some of them counted in the wages. They get other perquisites going to town. There was a man working for me last week driving horses, and his wages would be about 27/- or 28/-.

261. Mr. GILL.—Do I take it your view, Mr. O'NEILL, is that the Committee should not, in their Report, make any special reference to labour as one of the factors in the question of food production—that they should give the go-by to it?

262. Mr. O'NEILL.—If the Committee felt that they were in a position to suggest any means to people who might be less favourably circumstanced in regard to labour than we are in Dublin County—a means whereby their disposition would be lessened—that would be an extremely helpful suggestion to make, but I don't see how the Committee can do that, in view of the demand there is for men for Imperial purposes at the present time.

263. Mr. GILL.—We have to consider how far the agricultural produce of the country is susceptible of being increased, and you cannot answer that question fully without knowing how much available labour there is. I think you were saying also a little while ago that you believed a very considerable amount of increased production could be brought about without an increase in the existing labour.

Mr. O'NEILL.—Without any material increase in the existing labour.

264. Mr. GILL.—Will you explain that, because it is very important.

Mr. O'NEILL.—Where a farm is worked exclusively by paid labour, I do think that if the owner of the farm was desirous of developing tillage or increasing it, it would be quite possible for him to do that to an appreciable extent without materially increasing his labour bill.

265. Mr. GILL.—Would not the same apply to a small farmer who was working with his own family?

Mr. O'NEILL.—Yes, to a larger extent even with him, but even where paid labour was the only labour available, it would be competent for the farmer energetic enough, and having sufficient capital to provide himself with machinery and the other equipment necessary, to increase his tillage without making any serious increase of his labour bill.

266. Mr. GILL.—If we were satisfied that is so, it

would be most important for us to point it out. They would want more manure, seeds and capital: how far would the providing of these things take the place of labour.

Mr. O'NEILL.—I think the farmer is in a better position to provide capital at the present time than in a long time past.

267. Mr. BOWEN said that in reeling the corn crop there were three factors—the first was the land; they had that—the next was the manure; they had that; if they kept it—and the third was labour. The corn crops were the most easily killed of all crops. In the North of Ireland, if a man was shot at the harvest, he could get a soldier to assist him at 4/- a day. Now, if they could have assistance for harvesting the crops, the only difficulty would be ploughs. Motor ploughs were being put on the market. He thought these motor ploughs cost about £120.

Mr. O'NEILL.—£500 each.

268. Mr. HORACE PLUNKETT.—There is one selling at £170, and one at £220—one a ten horse power and the other twenty. The one that I was working ploughed about 2½ acres of average ground a day.

Mr. FIELD.—I should have hoped that it would have done more than that.

Mr. HORACE PLUNKETT.—I am talking of the smaller of these ploughs on the market.

269. Mr. BOWEN thought that they should recommend the Government to spend £100,000 on motor ploughs, which could be given to the farmers at remunerative prices. They had plenty of land, plenty of manure if they kept it in the country, and if they could get the ploughs the only thing they had to do was the harvest.

270. Mr. O'NEILL said that there was another element to consider at the present time, and that was the price of food. The land was producing so much more in pasture for the past year or so than it ever had produced before that they would have great difficulty in getting people to break up their land. There was very much less responsibility and worry in keeping land in pasture than in turning it into tillage, and he was afraid they would have great difficulty in convincing people who had land by which they made an easy livelihood to convert it into tillage.

271. The CHAIRMAN.—If this were so, we will have to get out of some of our habits.

272. Mr. GILL.—The question of getting them out of the pasture to tillage can be considered in reference to instruments.

Mr. O'NEILL.—Yes.

273. In reply to Mr. Montgomery, Mr. O'NEILL stated that the motor-ploughs would be absolutely useless on small hilly or stony farms. He would suggest that they be used in the West of Ireland, where there were large farms of land drained and sown by the Congested Districts Board. The motor ploughs would be of the most use where they had free scope.

274. Mr. McDONNELL said he did not think it was contemplated they should try to plough up the whole of Ireland. He did not think that the question about getting the extra labour was so great. If the labourers got comfortable surroundings they would stick to the farmers, and not go to the cities. He did not think that to increase the food supply that they would require any great extra effort or cost.

275. Mr. DUNN said that he thought the Committee should look at the matter more from the small farmer's point of view. He thought if they could induce these people by any means to increase their area of tillage by one or two acres, that that would meet the difficulty all over Ireland to a great extent. If they could show the people—especially the small farmers—if they were going to increase their tillage, that they would have a fair prospect that they would have a reasonable return, he believed they would have met the difficulty to a great extent. As far as inducing the large farmers or graziers at a class to increase their tillage, either for philanthropic or patriotic or any other motives, they would not succeed. They might induce, and would induce, comparatively small farmers who had labour mainly in their own families, but they must first show them that they would not be caught in their crops in the next year or the year after. Personally, he was not

such a reliance on the growth of wheat at all. He thought it would be far better for the farmers to produce the food that was mostly required. He believed that England was more suitable for wheat and he thought it would be better in this country to induce people to grow cattle food.

417. Mr. McDONNELL.—There is no trouble in growing corn, because you have the long winter. The small farmer in my district has to much labour.

418. Mr. O'NEILL.—We want to grow more food for our live stock in this country, and not to be importing foreign foods.

419. Mr. McDONNELL.—The land that is used for growing oats and wheat would not fatten cattle.

420. Mr. BAKER said that, speaking for the north, it was with these districts a question of indifference. What must be borne in mind was that the farmer would have to imagine that the labourer would get some increase. They had no movement in his country in that direction. A great many of the labourers who were inclined to migrate to Belfast and to the 4 (sic) remained at home that winter. The labourers' cottages had been a very great blessing to the country in that direction. The labourer took an interest in his cottage and plot, and remained in the rural district. The cottages and plots were working out a great economic change. He was satisfied that if the price was at all satisfactory—he did not mean an inflated price—that there would be an increase in tillage. As regards the children, they had a very interesting debate in the House of Commons on the question of allowing children to be employed in times like the present. There was no hardship in taking a child of ten years of age from school and using it.

421. Mr. McDONNELL said he understood that the National Commissioners had issued a statement that they would not enforce the attendance rule as against a teacher's salary if the School Attendance Committee was satisfied that the attendance had not been up to the average because the children were employed on the farms in consequence of the War.

422. Mr. O'CONNOR agreed with Mr. O'Neill that the labourer was as interested in his work and as industrious as he had ever been. His experience of dealing with labourers was that the farmer was much better off by trusting them and leaving them to their honour, of which they had a great deal, than by driving a stick to coerce them.

423. Mr. GOSWOLD said that as far as increased tillage was concerned, they must look to the tillage districts rather than the grass districts for that increase. They had not the labour or the horses or the implements in the grass districts. In the tillage districts labour was not so scarce as a great many people were inclined to represent. He did not think that in tillage districts there would be any difficulty in getting the larger farmers to plough up a slightly increased area—five or ten acres each, and on very small holdings one or two acres each. As to whether the increase should be in wheat or oats, that was a question that would be settled by the farmer and his circumstances. In any case, whether it was wheat or oats, it would be food, and it would enable them to provide more food for human beings and stock. He was sorry the Department had no figures at the moment to show the reduction in horses in different districts, but they had figures which showed that in some tillage districts in the north there had been more mares exhibited for nomination than in any previous year. That rather tended to show that there had been no great reduction in the number of working horses. As regards motor ploughs, he thought that they would be of very little service in the tillage districts. In counties like Monaghan and Cavan, where the average size of the holdings was less than 10 acres, they would be useless. In Donegal also, where the land was rocky, they would be uneconomical. In a district like Athy, where there was a lot of level land, they might be serviceable. He repeated that they must look to the tillage districts, and not to the grass lands, for the increase they required in cultivation. The labour question he did not think would affect the increase to any great extent.

424. Mr. GUNN said that the fact that the small farmers under thirty acres were the best producers of food had been brought out very strongly by the

figures. They had two and a half times as many eggs, five times as many pigs, and seven times as many poultry as the large farmer, and held exactly the same number of cattle. In his opinion, it was to the small farmers in the tillage districts that they must look to give them the increase they required. It was clear that that was the part of the country to which they must look for the best results and, according to the views of all the experienced men who had spoken at that Committee, there was no great necessity for an increase in the amount of labour on the soil in order to obtain an increased production.

425. Sir HORACE PLUNKET said he entirely agreed with Mr. O'Neill's opinion as to how they should handle that question; but he did not think the time had come until they had all the evidence before them to decide how they should treat the question of labour. He agreed that a great deal more could be got out of the Irish labourers by treating them well. He was speaking from experience. On 67 acres of land at his suburban residence, it came to be almost his duty to try certain experiments, because he was trying to assist co-operative societies of small farmers in different parts of Ireland to buy certain machinery, which, he maintained, would immensely increase the volume and decrease the cost of agricultural production. He would take it as a great honour if the Committee would come to his house, as he would like to demonstrate to them a few things that he had noted in regard to his own labour and machinery. He had never hoped his experiments would be commercially sound. On the other hand, there were certain farms where much the same work was being done on a successful scale. In addition to the good treatment of the labourer, which was the first factor, he thought that it could be demonstrated that the rendering of labour more efficient by the use of proper implements, with the proper instruction in the use of the implements, would put the large farmer in a position to pay much higher wages to the labourer than he was now paying. They knew that the Irish migratory labourer who went to England got over £1 a week, and that their labour was very highly spoken of in both England and Scotland, and they knew that those men would not work in Ireland. It was a barely sufficient and uneconomical procedure that those men who worked so splendidly in Great Britain came home and did not work at all except a little in the early spring. He should be extremely glad to see that labour made available in Ireland.

426. Sir HORACE PLUNKET continuing said he had a paper which he would hand to the Secretary, as he thought the Committee would like to see it. It was an Italian Royal Decree, issued when Italy went to war, dealing with the tillage circumstances in their country. It would be well that they studied what other countries were doing. On the tillage and labour question combined it might be well to ask their Secretary to try and ascertain what other Governments had done dealing with the same situation. He thought that the information could be easily got, and the Secretary and the Chairman could easily decide whether or not it would have any suggestive value for the Committee.

427. Mr. McDONNELL suggested that female labour should be more largely employed in this country as it was in Germany, France, and other countries in connection with agricultural work. There was now a slump in crochet, and girls might do work on the farms.

428. Sir HORACE PLUNKET said that in Italy the farmer, when he had made full use of his horses and implements, had to make them available for others of his neighbours who were short. That was a War measure.

429. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY said that if they could add only two acres to each small holding in the country under thirty acres, they would have right off three-quarters of a million acres of tillage. He did not quite follow the argument of Mr. Downes, who seemed to advocate the production of cattle-feeding on the small farms rather than the production of human food. He did not see how the small farmer of two acres was going to get on if he confined himself to the production of cattle food. If they came to look to the small farmer's economy, they would see that it was on human food that the chief expenditure was, and the first thing they had got to look to was how they were

going to feed those small farmers, of whom there were 150,000, with holdings from one to thirty acres. That was the first problem, and he did not hesitate to say that it ought to be done as far as possible off their own farms. If they got those people to grow additional oats or wheat or potatoes, the Committee would do a great deal to increase the tillage. When the labourer's family took to bread and tea dinners the pig disappeared. Where the labourer had a potato dinner, the pig was there, and the pig remained. He had heard women say that a bread and tea dinner was exceedingly comfortable, as there was no cleaning up to be done!

330. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY, continuing, said Mr. Montgomery raised the question as to what our women were doing. He did not think many of them could do much but then turnips or rather potatoes, but they attended to calves and pigs and poultry, and in that way they came in as agricultural workers. Remember, they had 350,000 small farmers, and he hoped all of these were married. If they took away 350,000 holdings under thirty acres, that left them only 170,000 other holdings, of which 77,000 were between 30 and 50 acres. These were still small farmers, because the calculations were in statute acres. If they took the farms under 50 Irish acres, they had 420,000, and only 100,000 other holdings. No doubt, the 100,000 other holdings took up the greater part of the land. The small farmers' question was the big question.

331. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY, in continuation,

The Committee then adjourned.

asked if the small farmers of the North mostly had a house?

332. Mr. BARRIE.—Yes.

333. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—Horses do a great deal of the work in the South. He quite agreed that they should lay down a minimum price for wheat and oats, but that need not be very large. He would not like the price to be such as would tempt the farmer to sell his wheat and not to eat it. He would like such a price as would make the crop profitable to those—that that would not lose by growing the crop if the price fell. He suggested a moderate minimum price of 25/6 a harvest for wheat. If the War continued the market price would probably be increased to 40/-, and if the Dardanelles were opened the price would be still 27/6 to the farmer.

334. The CHAIRMAN.—It might be possible for the Government to fix the price and take it over.

335. Mr. FLEMING asked if they could do anything to compel the men having grass farms in their possession to produce food and particularly for human beings, but for cattle.

336. Mr. O'NEILL.—You are up against the labor problem there.

337. The CHAIRMAN.—The Congested Districts Board exists for that purpose and nothing else. They get possession of the land. There is an enormous quantity of it broken up, and an enormous quantity of new holdings. It would be exceedingly interesting to hear Sir Henry Dornan.

FOURTH DELIBERATIVE CONFERENCE—WEDNESDAY, 21ST JULY, 1915.

The Committee met in the College of Science, Upper Merrion-street, at 3 p.m.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT WERE:

The Right Hon. T. W. BROWNE, M.P., *Chairman*.

Mr. JOHN BAGWELL.
Mr. HENRY T. BARRIE, D.L., M.P.
Mr. C. F. BASTINGS, M.A., D.L.D.
Mr. ROBERT N. BOLD.
Mr. ROBERT DOWNS, J.P.
Mr. WILLIAM FLEMING, M.P.
Mr. T. P. GILL.
Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc.

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.
Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P.
Mr. HENRY DE P. MONTGOMERY, D.L.
Mr. GEORGE MURRAY, J.P.
Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR.
Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P.
The Right Hon. Sir H. FLEMING, D.C.L., K.C.V.O.

Mr. E. A. M. MORRIS, M.A., B.L., *Secretary*.

338. The Secretary read the following letter from Sir Henry Dornan:—

DEAR Mr. BROWNE.—I have been absent from duty since Friday last, and must apologise for delay in answering your letter with reference to the Inquiry on Food Production in Ireland.

I explained to Mr. Browne over the telephone on yesterday that I did not contemplate giving any evidence before the Food Production Committee, as I am not aware of the precise matters in respect to which they desire information, and I don't think I have any information which would be specially useful to the Committee.

I have private engagements for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of this week which I cannot alter.

As explained in Mr. O'Brien's letter to you of the 16th inst., if the Board's staff can supply any information that the Committee desire, I should be very glad to see that this shall be done.

Faithfully yours,
HENRY DORNAN.

20th July, 1915.

Mr. BORN.—Mr. Boland asked me, when Sir Henry Dornan was being examined, to ask whether he would consider the advisability of ploughing with motor ploughs.

339. The CHAIRMAN.—We shall not have that opportunity. I will now ask the Secretary to read a letter from the Evicted Tenants' Association.

The Secretary read the following letter:—

IRISH EVICTED TENANTS' ASSOCIATION,
29 RICHMOND PLACE,
N.C.B., DUBLIN.

DEAR SIR,

I am directed by my Committee to write you and state that it is their wish that a member of our Association be asked to give evidence before the Food Production Committee.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed, JOHN BULL,

Exec. Sec.)

The Secretary,

Food Production Committee,
Upper Merion Street.

340. The CHAIRMAN.—If there is anyone particularly anxious to call them, I will hear this witness.

341. Mr. O'NEILL.—If there is one body in the country that would not have information of a useful character, I imagine that the evicted tenants' body would be that body. Let us pass on to business.

342. The CHAIRMAN.—Marked "read." I have reserved this afternoon for the consideration of a confidential correspondence between Lord Milner and myself on behalf of this Committee. After our last sitting I ventured to write a letter to Lord Milner, the Chairman of the English Food Production Committee, pointing out that if his Committee recommended a minimum price for wheat—as I had reason to believe they were about to do—I thought it desirable that this Committee should have—even if only informally—an opportunity of consulting with the English Committee. I further suggested that two members of our Committee should confer with his Committee in London in order that our policy might be, as far as it seemed desirable, co-ordinated. Mr. Birrell had protested at the outset against the appointment of three separate Committees instead of one Committee for Great Britain and Ireland. In order to guard against the three Committees recommending different things, I wrote, I say, a letter to Lord Milner, and I have received from him an important reply, which I will ask you to consider; but first I will ask the Secretary to read my letter to Lord Milner.

343. The SECRETARY then read the following letter:—

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND
TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION FOR IRELAND,
UPPER MERION STREET,
DUBLIN, 10th July, 1913.

MY LORD,

The Irish Committee on Food Production is now engaged in deliberation and has been brought alongside the serious question of a possible inducement for the Irish farmer to break up his land and to revert to tillage. One of the forms of inducement being considered by the Committee is the guarantee by the Government of a minimum price in the case of certain crops.

The Committee, before coming to a conclusion on this point, holds strongly the opinion that the question of the amount of a minimum price has a vital bearing on the general question of the advisability of this expedient. Amongst the several factors to be considered in fixing the amount they are much impressed by the danger of a figure which would be more than barely necessary to give the farmer a feeling of security in growing the required crop, having regard to the normal conditions of his business, and which, by setting up an artificial standard would prove an obstacle to his growing it in subsequent years, when a normal price was available, without a similar inducement.

This question of amount the Irish Committee—before coming to any conclusion—proposes to submit to a very close examination during future sittings when the various facts bearing upon the question are brought together from the different parts of the country.

The Committee, which includes eminent agriculturists and economists already possessed of practically all the information requisite for forming a judgment, intends to deal with this matter without any avoidable delay. There will be little taking of evidence in the usual way, and it is probable that the Committee may reach the Report stage on an early day.

It is obvious that, if the English Committee were also considering a minimum price—of which we have had a hint—a conference between representatives of the two Committees would be desirable before any conclusion, at any rate on the question of amount, were published. The publication of an amount recommended by the English Committee, would, in effect, put an end to the power of the Irish Committee to deal usefully with this vital question of amount any further; and in any case the desirability of some understanding on the matter, before any public commitment, is sufficiently clear.

In these circumstances I venture to suggest that at least before publication of an amount is made by your Committee, an informal conference such as I have indicated should be arranged.

The next meeting of the Irish Committee has been fixed for Wednesday next, 21st instant.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed), T. W. BRIDGES.

The Lord Viscount Milner, G.C.M.G., &c., &c.

344. The CHAIRMAN.—The following is Lord Milner's reply:—

I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 12th July. The English Committee have already agreed upon an interim Report dealing exclusively with wheat. It was felt that if any steps were to be taken to increase the average under wheat this autumn it was absolutely necessary that they should be taken at once. At the same time, as wheat is so preponderantly an English crop, we thought it possible to make our Report without previous consultation with the Scotch and Irish Committees, though but for the extreme shortness of time such consultation would evidently have been most desirable. Everyone agrees that nothing substantial can be done to bring about a large increase in the wheat crop without the guarantee of a minimum price. The only question is whether the game is worth the candle. Our Report practically amounts to this, that a pretty high figure would have to be guaranteed for several years. We have left it to the Government to say whether the emergency is such as to justify the State in taking the risk of a fall in prices below the suggested minimum. The Report will be in the hands of the Government this week, but I don't think there is any possibility of its being published until the week following. In view of what you told me of the course which the deliberations of your Committee are taking I certainly think, as you suggest, an informal conference is desirable. The English Committee met four days in the week—on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. We have now adjourned to Thursday. Our time of meeting is 3 to 6 in the afternoon. Should any members of your Committee be willing to come over and meet us a special meeting could, no doubt, be arranged at a time to suit their convenience. Perhaps you will kindly let me know as soon as possible so that I may arrange with my colleagues.

The only action I have taken upon that letter is that I have written to Mr. Birrell pointing out that this thing may be rushed in England and asking him to see that the Cabinet does not consent to the publication of this Report until they receive an interim Report from us also.

345. Sir HORACE PLUNKET.—Is that letter written this week or last week?

346. The CHAIRMAN.—It is dated the 10th instant. I wrote to Mr. Birrell last night.

347. Mr. MCCORMACK.—There is a document which has just been put before us, and I think it should be read before any action on that letter is considered—

the "Conclusions" of Sir James Wilson in regard to the price of wheat. That document will throw some light on the price of wheat. I think it has a bearing on the point—

398. The SECRETARY read the following copy of the "Conclusions" in a Supplementary Note on the "World's Supply of Wheat," by Sir James Wilson, K.C.S.I., Delegate to the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, which has just been forwarded to the Department—

"*Conclusions*.—From the above study of existing conditions and prospects and of the statistics brought together in my previous Notes, the following conclusions may be drawn as regards wheat, on the assumptions, (1) that there will be no extraordinary departure within the next three months from usual weather conditions for the world as a whole; (2) that the war will continue for another twelve months; (3) that the hindrances to the free transport of food from one country to another caused by the operations of war will continue much as they are at present, and more especially that the Dardanelles will remain closed.

"If allowance be made on the one hand for wastage owing to the war, and on the other for economies in consumption due to high prices, and it be remembered that India has already reaped a record crop, that good crops have been reaped in North Africa, and that a considerable proportion of wheat promises to be a record crop in the United States has already been reaped, it seems practically certain that at this moment (24th July) the amount of wheat in existence in the world as a whole is greater than it has been on this date on the average of the last five years.

"It seems probable that on 1st August the stock of wheat in Great Britain will be a little larger than usual, that in France it will be considerably larger than usual, and that in Italy it will be somewhat smaller than usual, and that, taking together all the importing countries, whose ports are open, the stock of wheat they will have in hand on 1st August will be at least equal to the average of past years.

"India has already reaped a record crop, and if allowance be made for increased area under wheat and for present harvest prospects, it now seems very probable that the United States and Canada will also have something like record crops. The prospects in Russia, France, Great Britain, the Argentine and Australia are at present good, and even if it be estimated that the yield of wheat in Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Spain and possibly Italy, may be below the average, it now seems practically certain (1) that the world's wheat crop for the year ending February, 1916, will be a record one, and (2) that at the end of September there will be in the world a much larger quantity of wheat than there ever was before.

"It seems probable that three of the most important wheat-exporting countries whose ports are open, namely India, the United States, and Canada will, taken together, have available for export in the year ending July, 1916, a larger quantity of wheat than they ever had before, and will of themselves have available for export almost as much wheat as will equal the total average demand of all the importing countries in the world put together (which has been 176 million quatrals per annum); and that if the amount of wheat available for export from other countries than those three is taken into account, it seems practically certain that the amount of wheat available for export during those twelve months, from the countries whose ports are open, will be very much larger than the probable demand for import of the importing countries whose ports are open.

"During the next few months, the importing countries, being in possession of their own harvests, are not likely to make any very urgent demand for wheat for import, or to be willing to offer exceptionally high prices. On the other hand, the principal exporting countries, finding themselves in possession of a large quantity of wheat than they have ever had before, are likely to be anxious to dispose of their surplus, and to be willing to accept lower prices than usual, more especially when they realise that the importing countries are in so urgent need of wheat and that they have to compete with each other and with the other

exporting countries, whose harvests are promising, in order to get rid of their unusually large surplus.

"The present high rates of freight and insurance, while they tend to raise the price of wheat in the importing countries, must, taken by themselves, tend to lower the price of wheat in the exporting countries.

"It seems probable therefore that, during the next few months, there will be a further rapid fall in the world's price of wheat, that it may fall to below the normal price in the exporting countries, and that it may not be much above the normal price in the importing countries. It seems likely that, by the end of September, in the United States, Canada, and India, the price of wheat may be not much, if at all, above what it was immediately before the war, and that in England the quoted price at Liverpool and London of such wheats as No. 2 Hard Winter, No. 2 Northern Manitoba, and Choice White Karachi may not be much above 40/- per quarter (say, 20 francs per quintal), as compared with the average price of about 38/- per quarter (say, 22 francs per quintal) in the month of July for the past five years.

"If the Dardanelles should be thrown open to trade, a considerable export of last year's surplus of wheat from Russia may be expected, as soon as arrangements can be made to transport it from the producing districts to the Black Sea, and this would accelerate the fall in the world's price of wheat even especially as a further large export would soon become available from this year's promising harvest.

"Should prices be depressed within the next few months, war insurance will cease, and freights are likely to fall rapidly as the ships now held up by the war become available for the purposes of general commerce. The demand for export into Belgium, Germany, and Austria will again become effective but will not be immediately urgent, as they will have their own crops to draw upon. Meanwhile Russia's surplus from last harvest, and a probable large surplus from her coming harvest, will become immediately available, and the world's price of wheat may be expected at once to fall to considerably below the average price of the last five years, notwithstanding the possibility that the release for purpose of economy of large stocks of gold, now held in reserve, may tend to keep up for a time all prices expressed in terms of gold.

"Signed, J. WILSON.

"8th July, 1915."

399. Mr. GIZA.—This document was sent on to us by Sir James Wilson himself.

390. The CHAIRMAN.—Gentlemen, we have here, if not the whole case, vital matter for discussion.

401. Mr. BASTABLE.—The continuation of credit when the war is over will tend to bring down prices. That would balance any release of gold.

402. The CHAIRMAN.—We would like your views, Professor Bastable, on the general point.

403. Mr. BAYNE.—I am not quite clear as to what the minimum price is to be.

404. Sir HORACE FLEMING.—It is said that the English price is to be 45/- a quarter on wheat for four years.

405. Mr. BASTABLE.—It would be quite ineffective in Ireland. A minimum price of 45/- would not do very much.

406. Sir HORACE FLEMING.—Sir James Wilson talks of the average price for the last five years.

407. Mr. BASTABLE.—38/-.

408. Most Rev. Dr. KEEL.—That was 38/- for choice wheat.

409. The CHAIRMAN.—If we are to attach any weight to Sir James Wilson's conclusions they seem to kill the need for an increase and accordingly for a minimum price as we will have a larger supply of wheat than ever.

410. Mr. FLEMING.—Would this minimum price affect the gamble in future operations that used to be carried on in the Stock Exchange, which certainly had a very mischievous effect on the world's supply of wheat. I understand that it is not possible at the present time owing to the war, but if it were to be permitted at the end of the war it would be very serious.

411. The CHAIRMAN.—I am not an expert, but wheat to my mind is a very small Irish crop. On the other

hand, we have a very considerable crop of oats, and that crop has the merit of feeding people and animals. In that respect oats seem to me to be an essentially Irish crop, and one to which a Committee like this ought to devote primary attention. I never was very much impressed by the growing of wheat in Ireland. If I were to make a choice, between a minimum price for wheat and a minimum price for oats I never would think twice about it. I should say oats right away. As between wheat and oats my own mind is quite clear. I would say oats in preference to wheat. That may start the discussion.

362. Mr. O'NEILL.—There is a further consideration with regard to the question you have raised, and it is this—If a minimum price is fixed on wheat and if there be fixed on oats it would have the effect of inducing the Irish farmer to sow wheat in land that is unsuitable for its growth and in all probability we should be inducing the Irish farmer to do a thing that was economically unwise for himself and certainly not helpful to the country in its present need. That is a matter that we must not lose sight of in the consideration of this question because I am satisfied—and I assure Mr. Gordon will agree with me—if you induce a farmer to sow wheat in land unsuitable for its production you will probably induce him to embark on an undertaking that will result in him carrying both you and himself. That would be disastrous both from the farmer's point of view and from the national point of view. Therefore it would seem to me that if this question is to be dealt with as a purely Irish question and in view of the fact that the production of oats is much more general in this country than wheat it would be necessary for this Committee to have a minimum price guaranteed for oats as well as for wheat.

363. Mr. MURPHY.—I agree with Mr. O'Neill that if you fix a minimum price on wheat alone you might encourage its growth too extensively. I think it is very necessary to grow oats. I would not agree to a minimum price for wheat and not for oats, because oats is a most important crop both for its grain and straw and is used for human as well as for cattle consumption. I think we could meet the case by not having our minimum for wheat too high because that would not abnormally encourage its growth, and fix such a price for oats as to make certain that the requirements of the country both for human and cattle feeding would be met and at the same time encourage tillage generally.

364. Mr. O'NEILL.—I am not talking against the fixing of a minimum price, but the wisdom of fixing a minimum price for one cereal only.

365. Mr. FOSTER.—I agree with what Mr. O'Neill says. It is not necessary for me to labour the point, but it strikes me that it would be well to consider whether it would be better to adopt a minimum price, or a bonus. That is a very important matter. It is a very big question.

366. Mr. O'NEILL.—Yes, but it is not a question of principle.

367. Mr. O'CONNOR.—Scotland is an oat producing country as distinct from England.

368. The CHAIRMAN.—I have not communicated with the Chairman of the Scotch Committee because wheat growing is not a big thing in Scotland.

369. Mr. O'CONNOR.—That is what I think, too. My reason for bringing up the matter was because I thought the oats question would arise in Scotland and Ireland. As far as wheat growing is concerned in Ireland I think there is a very large area that could very well grow wheat that has not been worked. In my own district the whole district has been noted as being highly valued under Griffith's Valuation because it was a wheat growing country. People got out of growing wheat because it was unprofitable. I agree with Mr. O'Neill that if there is a minimum price to be fixed on wheat it should apply to oats as well, and I would strongly urge that the inducement should apply to oats and wheat for Ireland.

370. Mr. DOWNES.—I ventured to express the opinion that we should look at this question not so much from the point of view of the production of food for man in regard to Ireland but more from the point of view of the production of food for animals. Our people are more inclined from their previous practice

to grow food for the production of beef, mutton, bacon, and poultry than they are to grow food for human consumption, and I think it would be better for us to direct our attention more to that branch of the subject rather than to the question of wheat. I understand that the object of this Committee is to produce food not for Ireland alone but for Great Britain as well, and I think the best way we can help to produce food for England as well as for Ireland is by devoting our attention to the production of a crop that will be useful for animal food. I don't believe in a bonus. A minimum price would have a greater effect in causing the farmer to increase his tillage in oats than if you gave a relative minimum price for wheat. Our line is more for producing food in the form of live stock than in the form of grain. For that reason I would be more in favour of a minimum price to be fixed, of oats than wheat.

371. Mr. BRYAN.—One of the great difficulties is the question of the balance between wheat and oats if you fix a minimum price for the two; and I don't know whether there is anyone of sufficient wisdom to fix that balance properly. That is a question of detail, but it goes to the root of the principle. Again, if you encourage these two cereals might not some encouragement be given to other forms of production.

372. The CHAIRMAN.—Wheat and oats are the main food.

373. Mr. BRYAN.—But they are very small in the total Irish production. The aim of this Committee is to encourage the total food production in Ireland. Looking at it without a proper knowledge of agriculture but judging it generally I would say that the aim ought to be to differentiate Irish production from English. In England wheat is very important, whereas in Ireland it is a minor consideration. The total area under wheat this year, which is an improvement on previous years, is less than 100,000 acres, and it hardly worth while entering into this speculative business of stimulating an industry of this kind while great difficulties would arise under the application. I have heard an explanation how this minimum price is to be done.

374. The CHAIRMAN.—What about a bonus.

375. Mr. BRYAN.—How is that bonus to be given? Is the Government to come in and purchase wheat, and if so is it to erect storehouses for the purpose? I suppose the English Committee have thought over this matter and have found some way of facing it. A bonus to two special forms of cropping is a disadvantage to the others.

376. Mr. DOWNES.—The fact that a man has a guarantee as to what will induce him to have more tillage in regard to other crops. It is an inducement that way.

377. Mr. O'NEILL.—Look at all the by-products of wheat.

378. Mr. BRYAN.—If more capital goes into wheat it will be less available for other things.

379. Mr. DOWNES.—If you increase wheat you increase turnips, potatoes and mangolds as well. That is a necessary consequence.

380. Mr. BORN.—What we want to do is to give the farmer a reasonable minimum price that would not be more than 10 per cent. over the price of the last four years as a guarantee that he is not going to lose by increasing his area under wheat.

381. The CHAIRMAN.—Would the game in that way be worth the candle.

382. Mr. BORN.—In that case the candle costs very little. I would not have a candle that was too expensive. All you want to do is to guarantee that the grower does not lose by increasing his tillage. You are not going to guarantee that he will make a great deal out of it. He will have his chance of high prices. It is not too much to ask the farmers to exert themselves to raise food for the nation if they are guaranteed that they will not lose over it.

383. The CHAIRMAN.—We set out with the idea of an inducement.

384. Mr. BORN.—I say 10 per cent. over the average of the last four or five years. In one district in Antrim which used to grow hundreds of acres of wheat not ten acres is grown now for every hundred acres which grew years ago. They can grow wheat now, but when the price fall they grow oats in preference. There is a great deal of Ireland that the same thing applies to; and where, if necessary, wheat of a good

quality can be grown. In Island Magee the same thing applies, and if it applies in the North, I am sure it applies to the South.

385. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—In the year 1870 the County Antrim grew 8,540 acres of wheat. Now the number of acres grown is only 700. That bears out your argument, Mr. Boyd.

386. Mr. BORN.—I would make a minimum price for both oats and wheat, but there is one thing I would urge about putting a fictitious price on either oats or wheat. If it gets out over the country that you are giving extravagant prices, labourers will get their backs up and they will say, why should the farmers get all the profit.

387. The CHAIRMAN.—If an inducement is given to the farmers, of course the labourer cannot be left out.

388. Mr. BORN.—Give a minimum price of not more than ten per cent. over the average of the last four or five years and you will be doing enough.

389. Mr. O'NEILL.—Tillage is not an undertaking that you can take up for one year only, and unless you give a farmer a guarantee that he is not going to lose not only for one year but for two or three or four years he is not going to take it up for you. That is why it is suggested that the minimum price should cover a number of years.

390. Mr. BORN.—Any great increase in tillage will involve the breaking up of grass lands.

391. Mr. O'NEILL.—Then the labour question comes in.

392. Mr. DOWNES said that they should not look to the big farmers but to the small ones for an increase of tillage.

393. Mr. BAGWELL.—I do not pretend to be an agricultural expert, but I know something about the question, and would like to associate myself with the remarks of those who said that if a minimum price was to be guaranteed in England for wheat, it was quite obvious that that price would have to be applied in Ireland, and if it applied in Ireland it would have to be applied to oats as well as wheat. Otherwise a quantity of unsuitable land might be used for growing wheat. I am not satisfied on the question of a minimum price and would not like to take any responsibility in regard to it. It might lead to great financial difficulties and do more harm than good, and we have no explanation of how it is to be applied. If we give a minimum price to a certain crop it might dislocate the whole crops of the country. If we give a minimum price to a certain article it might result in other kinds of tillage decreasing and we may very easily be worse off than before. If potatoes and root crops and other things decreased as a result of giving a bonus on oats, more harm than good might be done.

394. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—It won't reduce the root crop at all.

395. Mr. O'NEILL said that he thought it would have the contrary effect because it would increase the production of farmyard manure by having more straw and fodder for the cattle.

396. Mr. BAGWELL said that as far as he could see, the English Committee did not take the responsibility of putting on a minimum price.

397. The CHAIRMAN.—I think Mr. Bagwell is right.

398. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—If the farmers are asked to increase their growth of crops they cannot be asked to do so if it involves them in a loss. Wheat has been grown in this country for years past at a loss because it had been unsaleable.

399. The CHAIRMAN.—The Government asked us to advise them as to the possibility of maintaining or extending the production of food. If we answer that question in the negative the thing is over so far as we are concerned, but if on the other hand we say that it is possible to increase the food production we are bound to tell them how. We all agree that we have no right to ask the farmer to break up his land to grow crops at a loss for the good of the general public. And if we were asked to do so he would refuse. I think what we are bound to do is to tell the Government whether we think a minimum price or some other form of inducement—whatever you call it—is advisable under the circumstances. If we answer that, we are not bound to tell them how to carry it out. They are the Government of the country and they will find the way.

400. Mr. FIELD.—The circumstances are precisely the same as in the War Loan. The Government wanted money and they had to give an increased percentage to get it. If they want food they must give something in the nature of an inducement to the farmer to produce it.

401. The CHAIRMAN.—It is possible to increase the food supply. We are agreed on that. The next question is by what means can it be increased. Do you say by a minimum price, or a bonus, or the purchase of the whole crop by the Government?

402. Mr. BASTANT.—Why should we emphasize wheat?

The CHAIRMAN.—I am against doing it. I am not in favour of wheat at all. It is quite clear if you give a bonus for the growing of wheat you cannot refuse to give a bonus for the growing of oats.

403. Mr. BAGWELL.—If you bonus oats need you bonus wheat.

404. The CHAIRMAN.—If it is done in England I don't see how we can escape it.

405. Mr. BAGWELL.—I quite agree that if the Government decides that it is absolutely necessary to increase the area under tillage and to produce more food then there will have to be some guaranteed minimum price. I agree with that, but should be very sorry to say whether that necessarily has arisen or not. I think that is for the Government to do. We ought to put "if" before anything that we say in respect of a minimum price.

406. Mr. BORN.—The fact that we are here at all means that this necessity has arisen.

407. The CHAIRMAN.—Still Mr. Bagwell is quite right. It is not for us to say that it is to be done.

408. Mr. BORN.—We are asked can the food supply be increased and we say "yes" but we must guarantee the farmer against loss." That might not mean a bonus at all.

409. Mr. O'CONNOR.—The question might never arise.

410. Mr. O'NEILL.—It is quite possible.

411. Mr. BORN.—All that the farmer wants is an insurance. If he raises twice as much as he has been raising the outcome of that might be that there would be a glut in the market, and what the farmers want is that that will not happen and that such a price will be secured for them as say 10 per cent. over the average for the last four years.

412. Mr. O'CONNOR.—We are all agreed that wheat and oats are the two most essential articles of food for man and beast.

413. Mr. GILL.—I take it that Lord Milner's letter means that the English Committee have only considered wheat and that they put it to the Government, "if you think that England ought to go in largely for growing wheat the only way of doing that is by fixing a minimum price at a pretty high figure for several years."

414. Sir HENRY FLEMING.—I heard four years is what they had in their minds.

415. Mr. O'NEILL.—I would not advocate it for more than four years.

416. Mr. GILL.—They might have been specially asked to look at one crop. One or two things follow from that. Assuming that the Government and the Committee in England think it desirable to have an extra quantity of wheat grown, then I think the fact that England is concentrating upon wheat gives a good deal of light as to our own line. Apart from the amount of wheat that it is desirable for farmers to grow for their own consumption and for straw it would appear that it would not be necessary to look upon wheat as one of the crops that should be very largely increased. Moreover the problem that has been put to us is to increase the food supply of the country for war purposes, and the way of looking at the Irish part of the problem would be to consider how Ireland can in the shortest time produce the greatest amount of food. I take it that the answer is that by a general increase of her production on the lines that she is now pursuing—on the lines that all the reformers are urging her to pursue—that is the way she can produce the greatest amount of food in the shortest space of time. If we do urge her forward on these lines we will be urging her towards a position that she will not have to retreat from and the result will be an advance in the whole of Irish agriculture. Therefore everything in my opinion seems to guide us in the direction

of a recommendation to encourage food production in Ireland upon the lines of the present agricultural system, and that includes both crops for human and animal consumption. I think that there ought to be a differentiation as between the lines pursued by the three countries. As we have learned that the English Committee are concentrating on wheat it would be well to know what the Scotch Committee are going to do before we come to our final conclusion. The other point is the question of the amount of a minimum price. Assuming that the minimum price is a desirable form of inducement the amount of that price should be as low as we can possibly make it consistently with guaranteeing farmers against losses according to the normal prices that he gets. If you give an artificial price you not only give an unhealthy over-stimulus to one particular crop, but as soon as this emergency is over you will never get the farmers to grow that crop again without a continuation of such inducement. If a price is fixed in England for wheat of 45/- a quarter, that would be an extraordinary stimulus of wheat growing. I take it that it is a principle in considering a minimum price that it should not be more than will barely suffice to give the farmer a sense of security in growing the crop.

417. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I agree with Mr. Gill that we ought not to open our mouth too wide in any demand we may make at this time. We must not forget that there is a general consumer. We shall have above all things to show that our demand is reasonable. In Ireland the growing of wheat means a radical change in our system which could never have any effect within the period for which we are making provision. With regard to the exact question that we have to decide to-day I take it that it is our wish to get into touch with the two other Committees to prevent them taking any action without consultation with us. You want to know their minds and to tell them what our mind is. I don't think that we are in a position until we have heard the Agricultural Expert of the Department to decide what form of inducement, assuming that an inducement is necessary, will produce the best result. I think there are other things besides a bonus or a guaranteed price. There might be assistance in the matter of manure and machinery. At any rate I would not like to arrive at a conclusion until we have heard the Expert of the Department upon the whole situation. At the same time I don't see why we should stop the English Committee from making their recommendation in regard to wheat growing in England so long as we enter a caveat that any conclusion they may come to does not affect the problem in Ireland. So long as you make that clear I don't see why we should object to their going on with their report.

418. Mr. GILL.—The one point on which we should try to hold them up is in publishing the minimum price, because once that is done our hands are tied and it affects our whole position.

419. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—There is a good deal in that.

420. Mr. GILL.—Lord Milner says that the minimum price is to be fixed at a pretty high figure. It is a pretty low figure we should try to get.

421. The CHAIRMAN.—The English farmers want protection. I don't know whether the Irish farmers want it or not.

422. Mr. O'NEILL.—I would like to point out to the Committee that if a minimum price is fixed on wheat it is absolutely essential to preserve the balance of things in this country, and that a minimum price should be fixed on oats as well in Ireland.

423. Mr. BARNES.—There is practical unanimity that some form of minimum price is the only means of increasing tillage in Ireland under the present circumstances. It is a startling commentary upon the ability even of gentlemen posing as experts that since the date of Sir James Wilson's document the prices presently ruling are opposed to all his forecasts. I agree that we must apply this minimum price to oats as well as to wheat, and I would say that the average farmer would consider himself as well remunerated by receiving 49/- a ton for oats if you are basing the remuneration for wheat at £30 15s. As to how a minimum price would be put into effect by the Government, it would be known what the minimum price was. The Government would say in effect, "whatever balance of the crop is unsold at the lot of February or March, we undertake to take from the grower at that price."

424. Mr. O'NEILL.—And there would be no interference with the market prices until that charge had been reached.

425. Mr. BARNES.—There would be a free market.

426. Mr. O'NEILL.—That is what I mean.

427. Mr. BARNES.—It is an insurance fund for food supply, and though the Government may lose a little on the wheat bought this way, it is a very cheap insurance fund.

428. Mr. O'NEILL said that according to Mr. Barnes's suggestion the minimum price would not affect more than one-fourth of the crop.

429. Mr. BARNES.—Perhaps not 10 per cent. of it.

430. Mr. GORDON.—I think if there is to be any substantial increase in wheat or oats it is necessary that there should be a minimum price or bonus. We may by moral reason, as we did last year, bring about an increase, but it will be comparatively small. I think the English Committee had in their minds wheat, and wheat alone, and their reason for that is that wheat is the grain crop for England that will produce the best return. It is totally different in Ireland. In my opinion owing to climatic conditions Ireland is better suited for producing oats than wheat, and oats is a safer crop to grow. If you bring about a big increase in wheat it can only be done by growing wheat on the land mown this year, because old pasture land will not grow wheat successfully. You can grow oats with perfect success on old pasture land and have perhaps a more remunerative crop than on mown land. The area of land that you can grow wheat on is comparatively small. We have very large areas of land reclaimed from bog, which is quite unsuitable for wheat. It is only our clay lands and deep loams that will grow wheat successfully. The question has been often argued that wheat will give a better return than oats per acre, but the reason that wheat shows a higher yield than oats in Ireland is because it is restricted to the most suitable land, whereas with oats we have it grown on all classes of soil. Again wheat to be really successful must be sown in the Autumn. There is no question about oats being the most suitable crop for this country. Oats straw is largely used for fodder for cattle and wheat straw only for the purpose of litter or for commercial purposes. I thoroughly agree with Mr. Gill that it would be a mistake to fix a high minimum price as it might have a disastrous effect. We might have large areas of land ploughed up for wheat that would give a better return in pasture. There might be a tendency to do that if a high minimum price is fixed.

431. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—My Agricultural Committee met yesterday and wrote of opinion that the current prices and prospects were enough to induce people to grow sufficient wheat and the same thing applied to oats. Of course there are other parts of Ireland where they will want a considerable amount of grass land ploughed. Would it be possible if a minimum price was fixed for England to fix a different one for Ireland?

432. Mr. O'NEILL.—No.

433. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Then all we can do is to try and induce the English Committee to fix as low a minimum price as we do and to fix a relative price for oats. I expect that there will be no great difficulty in securing that the Government will not fix an extravagant minimum price for England because the consumer in England is pretty well able to take care of himself. I think that we have every reason to hope that the price will not be extravagant, but whatever it is it appears that we in Ireland will have to be bound by it and all that remains for us is to fix a relative price for oats.

434. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—Mr. Montgomery said that his Committee thought the present price of grain crops would be a sufficient inducement to farmers to increase their tillage. I think that is so. The present price of grain crops is so high that if the farmers were not afraid of the prices falling that price would be sufficient inducement to them, and if we could satisfy them that the price would continue I am certain that that price would be inducement enough. The inducement is the price itself, but the farmer will say, "while the prices are good now, what guarantee have I that when I come to sell the prices won't have fallen back to the old price of wheat of, say, about 8d. per stone," and hence the minimum

price would be not only an inducement but a security. The view we ought to take of the minimum price is this, that the farmer will be able to say that he would get as much for his crop as would save him from loss. I had in my mind 50 per cent. over the average of the last five years. If you have a minimum price for wheat you must also have a minimum price for oats. Mr. Gill raised the question of going on sound lines. We must not give an artificial stimulus. If you set up a big price for wheat or oats or for any other commodity once it falls below that price our people will do nothing and remain so for perhaps ten years. It is only in later years that the farmers have given up talking of the prices they got in the seventies, and the fishermen in my diocese talk of the time when they got 24/- for 120 fish and say "what is the use of catching them now when you only get 6/- or 7/-." Our first consideration is if we succeed in feeding the people of Ireland, in case the worst comes to the worst, we will relieve the Government of the three countries of the burden of the Irish people, and consequently it is of the greatest importance that we should see that our farmers are able to feed themselves. There are two distinct questions before us—one the question of feeding the farming population itself and the other is the question of turning food into money. Our deliberations go too much, I think, on the money side. We have to feed something like 400,000 families of small farmers and farm labourers. That takes a lot of food, and when it comes to the question of producing food for these on their own land the question of price does not enter very much into the matter at all. Every county can produce plenty of wheat for its own consumption—at least they did, except Carrow, Donagall, Fermanagh, Leitrim, and Sligo, up to 1872. We are very much inclined to go on the idea that the world after the war will be the same as it was before and that the crop that was profitable before the war will be profitable after it, and vice versa. I don't know the world we are to have after the war, but I am perfectly satisfied about this, that methods of farming that were unprofitable before the war will be profitable afterwards and vice versa. As long as the people are producing the necessities of life we are on safe lines, but once you go on producing luxuries you are no longer on safe ground. After the war there will be a development in the world that we cannot contemplate. During my four

years on a Royal Commission on Unemployment this was driven into my head—the whole question in Great Britain is a question of wages. After the war is over you will find over two millions of people who are employed to make munitions of war out of employment on the spot and you will have at least a million of soldiers and sailors looking for work, so you will have a terrible slump, and it will take a considerable time before these three million of people can be absorbed back into work. My opinion is that considerable numbers will never get back into work because the world will be so much impoverished and production so much reduced that the manufactures of England in my time cannot be in the same position as they were before the war. The immediate effect will be great unemployment, and if there is great unemployment there will be no great demand for Irish beef and mutton in England and consequently the cattle men had better see how far cattle will be the profitable industry it has been. I cannot say how far this will work out. There are causes there, and these causes will produce effects, but to what degree I cannot tell. I would not like that we should concentrate on our report from the point of view that beef and mutton and butter and eggs will be as profitable after the war as before and that the necessities of life such as potatoes and oats and barley and wheaten bread would be as cheap as before. I have no doubt that English statesmen are very anxious to produce the necessities of life in England because with the submarine warfare there is no security for the food of the nation. England, Scotland, and Ireland were secure three or four months ago, but the last three or four months has changed the whole situation. The result in my mind is that it would be very desirable to increase the cereals in this country, both wheat and oats, and also as far as possible to feed our own cattle, we must not forget the point the more tillage the more cattle. Let us take the money test. We have twelve million acres in Ireland under grass. If you take the total production of cattle and butter and three things and see how much per acre that land is producing; then you take the land under tillage and see how much it is producing, you will see that the tillage produces two or three or four times as much as the grass, and therefore we must begin with tillage. My view is that if you produce largely the necessities of life you cannot err on that point.

The Committee then adjourned.

FIFTH DELIBERATIVE CONFERENCE—FRIDAY, 23RD JULY, 1915.

The Committee met at the Royal College of Science, Dublin, at 3 o'clock, p.m.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT WERE:

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., Chairman.

Mr. JOHN BASWELL.
Mr. HUGH T. BARRIE, D.L., M.P.
Mr. C. F. BARTHELE, M.A., J.L.D.
Mr. J. F. BOLAND, M.P.
Mr. ROBERT N. BOND.
Mr. ROBERT DOWNEY, J.P.
Mr. WILLIAM FLEMING, M.P.
Mr. T. P. GILL.
Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc.

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.
Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P.
Mr. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L.
Mr. GEORGE MURTAGHAN, J.P.
Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR.
Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P.
The Right Hon. Sir H. PARNELL, D.C.L.,
E.C.V.O.

Mr. E. A. M. MORRIS, M.A., B.L., Secretary.

455. The CHAIRMAN.—The Cabinet meets on Monday, and I want to be able to give them some idea of what conclusions the Committee have arrived at. I don't propose to send an interim report to the Cabinet. I propose to send a brief statement as to what we have decided.

456. The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—I think we ought to agree to fix a minimum price on wheat and oats.

457. The CHAIRMAN.—The Committee must take this as a *war measure*.

458. Mr. GILL.—We ought to consider whether we can or not come to a conclusion about a minimum

price. I think we did agree on the principle of fixing a minimum price and that that price should be as low as is consistent with securing the farmer against loss.

438. Mr. MURTAGHAN.—We have all agreed on that point.

440. Mr. BASTABLE.—That is to say if a minimum price were to be fixed it should be a low price.

441. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—A low minimum price would be less objectionable than a high one.

442. The CHAIRMAN.—The principle of indorsement was agreed to by the Committee.

443. Mr. GILL.—I think we ought to discuss now with Professor Bastable whether we should agree to the principle of a minimum price.

444. Mr. BAWELL.—The question before us is whether we should make an interim report.

445. The CHAIRMAN.—I didn't ask that. The Cabinet meets on Monday, and I have suggested that we should give them our views.

446. Mr. BAWELL.—Whatever goes forward now as the finding of this Committee will have to be more or less what is in our final report, so it amounts to making a report. I feel somewhat doubtful about this minimum price and I would not agree to recommend a minimum price on my own responsibility or as a member of this Committee without putting the responsibility on the Government of making whether they consider it necessary to have a very big increase in the cereal crops. I should like to safeguard myself in that way because in principle I am very much opposed to the idea.

447. Mr. GILL.—I think that is quite right—I think we may ease our minds by leaving it to the Government to say whether the circumstances are such that a large increase of food is essential.

448. Mr. MURTAGHAN.—Is there no other form of indorsement except a minimum price that would perhaps bring about the same result with less expense? I hold the idea very strongly that there is another form of indorsement which will bring about the desired result with less dislocation to the country or any additional cost. The way I look on it is this—we all hated with pleasure the announcement of a maximum because it kept the price in moderation. I think we were all pleased with the action of the Government in providing a supply of wheat to keep food cheap for the people. If therefore we turn around and go in the other direction and recommend a minimum price it may raise the price to the consumer, which is a very different thing. My view would be to increase the production of oats and wheat in this country, and I would like to do it in such a way that I would not hurt the consumer in any way but really benefit him, and the man who gave an increased quantity of food, to help them also. In my opinion that can be done by offering the man who increases his crop of wheat and oats a sum commensurate with his expenses in connection with the matter.

449. The CHAIRMAN.—A bonus?

450. Mr. MURTAGHAN.—Yes, either in the form of seed or cash. It will have this additional advantage that it will encourage the man who grows his own wheat to use it on his own farm, while if you have a high price he will bring it to the market and sell it. I ask you whether you cannot arrive at the object in view without recommending a minimum price which everyone must know would be exceedingly objectionable, particularly to the consumer. It would be a very chancy thing to the farmer, but I doubt if it would be beneficial in the end. By fixing a minimum price you are paying the man who will do nothing for you—they all share in the benefit, the man who increases and the man who does not increase his tillage, and therefore it seems to me that if you had a little time to look into the figures to see what the effect of this suggestion of mine would be, I think it would be based on the part of the Committee not to arrive at a decided opinion at present. I agree something must be done, and if nothing better than a minimum price can be arrived at, it must be fixed, but it occurs to me that something more acceptable can be done, something less harmful and less costly. The increased average under wheat last year was very considerable. And I was calculating, with the figures at my disposal, and it seems to me that my suggestion of giving so much per acre to the farmer who increased his tillage would be less costly than the other method.

451. Mr. GILL.—How much would you contemplate per acre?

Mr. MURTAGHAN.—I thought of a maximum for wheat of 25/- and for oats 4/-.

452. Mr. GILL.—How many acres would you expect roughly of an increased production?

Mr. MURTAGHAN.—I would think that the increase that took place last year in wheat would be maintained. That was very considerable—50,000 acres.

453. Mr. GILL.—Supposing you contemplate a much larger growing this year, say 200,000 acres. Supposing the minimum price is fixed at a figure which in all probability would be exceeded by the market price. In the first place you would have no expense at all. The Government does not put its hand into its pocket at all and you don't hold out a bribe to the farmer to do something abnormal, but you can give him a feeling of security in doing what the circumstances of the time call for and which would be generally beneficial to the agriculture of the country. If you fix a figure which is likely to be above the market price, you do a vicious thing in every way and it would probably be a backward step. Assuming that you can fix a figure which would be what I describe as then at the same time a minimum price in the simplest type of indorsement in that order. There are other indorsements that might help.

454. Mr. MURTAGHAN.—In fixing a minimum price you are introducing a vicious principle and you are giving benefits indiscriminately to those who deserve them and to those who do not.

455. Mr. GILL.—If we so arrange it that the minimum price is lower than the market price it will not apply at all.

456. Mr. McDONALD.—What is to prevent a man planting a crop on land that does not suit if you give him the bonus suggested by Mr. Murtaghan? If you fix the minimum price at a figure that will induce him to grow and guarantee him against loss, he will grow on suitable land that will give a profitable return. If you adopt Mr. Murtaghan's suggestion he will plough up any kind of land, and the result is very doubtful.

457. The CHAIRMAN.—The prices of wheat and oats are very good now. If the farmer could get a guarantee that these prices would continue they would not require a minimum price. A good many judges don't believe that prices will fall much. Now, if you fix a minimum price at a rate to protect the farmer and not for his aggrandisement, to make it safe for him to grow the crop—safety is what he wants—I question whether we would have to spend much in this way. That is what commends the minimum price to me. It may never be called into regulation.

458. Mr. O'CONNOR.—I agree that this minimum price has a lot more to recommend it than anything that could be said against it. On the other side there is the question of a maximum price in the interest of the consumer.

459. Mr. FLEMING.—I would not be in favour of the maximum. I am rather in favour of Mr. Murtaghan's suggestion, but I don't see how it could be carried out. There would be an enormous amount of practical difficulties and farmers might be induced to sow on unsuitable land, and the result would be ruinous in some instances. In this crisis we have to deal with I think the minimum price is the best.

460. Mr. BASTABLE.—The first point is that we have got no explanation of the machinery by which this system of a minimum price is to be administered. It may be said that this is a matter for the Government, but I don't think it is the business of the Committee to make a recommendation that they cannot see their way to carry out. The minimum price would involve in certain conditions the purchase of seed by the Government. The suggestion is that that minimum price is to obtain for four years. We hold that the war conditions will pass away before that and therefore the minimum price would be in operation perhaps two years after these conditions had ceased to operate.

461. Mr. GILL.—We have not decided on four years.

462. Mr. BASTABLE.—I am speaking of the recommendation of the English Committee. If that be done you are arranging a scheme which is ostensibly designed to meet an emergency, but it applies beyond it, and therefore I would suggest that in any recommendation from this Committee the time should be more limited.

463. **THE CHAIRMAN.**—We are all agreed on that.

464. **MR. BARNARD.**—I was very glad to notice that the practical farmers did not want an exorbitant price. I don't know whether the farmers in England took up a similar attitude, but under the circumstances that exist I suppose no one will object to any proceedings by the Government which they regard as necessary in a condition of emergency and I think we also would recognize that the increase of the food supply is very desirable. Then there comes another question—as it desirable to stress specially the production of wheat. When we come to the figures we find that the total crop under wheat in Ireland at present gives a supply of about one-twentieth of the amount required for Irish consumption—say 5 per cent. Now, suppose by the fixing of a maximum price at a low figure you get an increase in acreage thereof and a similar increase in production, that would give an increase of 20 per cent. for Ireland. The question is, is it worth while entering upon a difficult experiment of this kind to get a result of that kind—you get an addition of 15 per cent. I would suggest that it is hardly worth while to take very extreme measures to reach a result of that kind, and I don't know whether the practical members of the Committee would anticipate a greater increase than that, which would mean, say, 200,000 acres. I don't know whether that amount could be obtained or not. Therefore if anything is to be done it would seem that oats is a crop that ought to get special consideration, but then we have to bear in mind that any problem of food production in Ireland is complicated by its relation to England. The Irish farmer would expect a similar price to that fixed in England. It might happen that a very large sum might be paid out of the British Exchequer to English farmers, and if there was a lower minimum price to Ireland the Irish farmer would not receive one penny. That would add to our financial grievances. It might become necessary to require some compensation. As the Irish cereal is oats it would seem that it is in the case of oats a minimum price would become most important in this country. Roughly there are about a million acres under oats. I don't know whether that would be increased by one-third under the moderate form of bonus that would be given for oats calculated on a proportionate scale to wheat. That is a question for practical men to consider. I don't know that the total amount of encouragement would be of immense advantage to the Irish farmer. They are in a prosperous condition at present. Therefore at present no difficulty occurs. The question of giving relief or assistance to the farmer after the war conditions had passed away would have to be considered too.

465. **MR. BARNARD.**—If the Government say there is a necessity for a large increase and that that can only be brought about by guaranteeing a minimum price, and that a minimum price is guaranteed for wheat in England, I think it is quite obvious that that minimum price would obtain in Ireland too. You cannot exclude Ireland. What we have to consider as regards Ireland is how to increase wheat without decreasing oats and how to increase oats without decreasing the acreage under other food crops which are equally useful in their way. I would not favour a bonus on wheat or oats unless I understood that the farmer is going to increase his total acreage of tillage.

466. **MR. O'NEILL.**—Did Mr. Murnaghan contemplate the extension of the bonus to one or four years?

467. **MR. MURNAGHAN.**—During the duration of the war.

468. **MR. BARNARD.**—If the whole area under tillage is increased it is a matter of breaking up grass land. Then the question is as to what the minimum price shall do as regards breaking up grass land—that is how long should such a man be guaranteed in his price.

469. **MR. BARNARD.**—As regards Mr. Murnaghan's suggestion it may interest the Committee to know that a similar suggestion was brought forward by a member of my Committee in September last. It was debated and finally supported only by proposer. The real argument against it was that there could be no effective check as to the increased tillage having taken place in the proper kind of land and it might require a small army of officials. The combined wisdom of my Committee was that the solution was not to be

forced in that direction. Mr. Murnaghan seems to feel that the suggestion of a minimum price would have the effect of putting up and keeping up the price. I don't quite see how that could happen. It resolves itself into the question, what is a high price for wheat. I am old enough to remember when 45/- was looked upon as a very moderate price, and in 1914 it fell in England to a guinea a quarter and ruined thousands of farmers. It is all a question of what is a low price for wheat. For the five years prior to the war the average price was 38/- in England. If you drop the first year of that five years and include the current year I think you will find that the average of the five years including 1914 would probably work out 40/-, so that after all what the proposal amounts to is this, that the farmer is to have guaranteed to him at the maximum 5/- per quarter advance on the average price of the last five years. That does not strike me as an expensive State guarantee at all. If nothing is done we are quite sure that the acreage for the current year will be maintained. I am not at all sure. The real question the farmer in my district is putting to himself is, what is going to happen. We want to get over that difficulty, which is bound to assert itself with increasing force. Mr. Robertson spoke of the necessity for giving an inducement to wheat growing rather than to oats. I think we should encourage oat growing more strongly than we have done. My own view is that the State runs very little risk in guaranteeing the figure that has been suggested. I believe that a minimum price should be given for oats as well as for wheat. I don't think that the Irish farmer would be satisfied with 42/6 if an English farmer recommended 45/- a quarter.

470. **SIR HORACE FORTESCUE.**—What I want to know is, in what state of facts are we supposed to be giving our opinion. If the state of facts is that already the English farmer has been given a guarantee of a certain minimum price for a certain number of years for the chief crop that is grown in England, then I don't see how you can avoid treating the Irish farmer similarly, but I feel that the Government would be wrong in both cases. I would like to reserve my views until I have a little more information, and read the English report.

471. **THE CHAIRMAN.**—The Committee must, in my judgment, comply with Mr. Birrell's request and give him an indication of what the feeling of this Committee is for Monday's Cabinet Meeting. If you say that you cannot make up your mind until you see the English report I cannot show you that report.

472. **SIR HORACE FORTESCUE.**—Then I would rather reserve my opinion.

473. **MR. GILL.**—The Report of the English Committee states that if the Government think it right that a very large amount of wheat growing is to be encouraged next year, then the essential measure to bring about that result is the fixing of a minimum price of 45/- per quarter for four years. But they do not make a recommendation with regard to the maximum price.

474. **SIR HORACE FORTESCUE.**—My difficulty is not with regard to the wheat but to the million acres of Irish oats. I would like a little more light. All I will say for myself now is that I presume before any definite statement is made on behalf of the Committee to the Chief Secretary that we shall be allowed to see it. If the Chairman lets me see what he proposes to say on behalf of the Committee I would say whether my views are in accordance with that of my colleagues.

475. **MR. BOLAND.**—Lord Selborne is desirous of having immediate legislation.

476. **SIR HORACE FORTESCUE.**—What I would like to know is whether the Irish farmer really does require a money inducement to increase his tillage. I am of opinion that the Irish farmer ought to grow a great deal more oats than he does at present, but I am rather doubtful whether, when you are asking him to increase the area under oats, you are asking him to make any sacrifice at all. It is on that I want some light.

477. **THE CHAIRMAN.**—The real question is—Is this an emergency or is it not. In the abstract, Sir Horace, you are quite right. I think the farmers ought to grow oats without any inducement, but will they do that in this great time of peril.

478. **MR. GILL.**—We were discussing the question as to whether we ought to make the recommendation

hypothetically—that we should leave it to the Government to say whether the emergency was such as to call for a great increase in the growing of these crops and if it did to meet such an emergency a minimum price would be necessary.

479. **Sir HORACE PLUNKETT**.—I am in agreement that if such a course is taken by the Government in one part of the United Kingdom it must be taken in all; secondly, that if the Government call upon the Irish farmers to go out of their ordinary course and to do something that they might consider to be risky or ask them to make any sacrifice for the nation that then they ought to have a proper insurance. So far I am entirely with the Committee. Where my mind is not made up is when we distinctly say to the Government that if they think that Ireland ought to grow more food than we are at a certain minimum price ought to be guaranteed to farmers for a term of years for growing oats, I want to think over the matter and I want more light.

480. **Mr. O'NEILL**.—What is it exactly you want to know in order to make up your mind on the balance of the question?

481. **Sir HORACE PLUNKETT**.—Whether we could not induce the Irish farmers to increase as much as they ought to increase the area under oats without any inducement.

482. **Mr. O'NEILL**.—The farmer's answer to that question is this—since the Department has come into existence it has brought under our notice the drainability of the Irish farmer increasing his tillage. Now we know what the result of that advice has been, and do you imagine that because we repeat what has been said publicly and privately and advocated in the press for the last fourteen years as to what the Irish farmer should do that he is now going by the touch of our magic wand to be completely transformed.

483. **Sir HORACE PLUNKETT**.—I understand that the Chairman must send a statement to Mr. Burrell for Monday's meeting of the Cabinet. If he would be good enough to let me know the statement he is going to send on behalf of the Committee I will see whether I can associate myself with it.

484. **Mr. BORN**.—You are a member of this Committee. It is not the Chairman that is making this recommendation. It is the Committee. We want your assistance in coming to a conclusion.

485. **Mr. O'CONNOR**.—If we adopt the English price—45/- a quarter—

486. **The CHAIRMAN**.—I won't take that. We will not allow ourselves to be placed in the secondary position as regards the figures. I cannot govern the Committee, but what I say is this, if the Irish representatives of the Government in the Cabinet desire any advice for Monday we are entitled to give it and I will do my best to do it.

487. **Mr. GILL**.—The report of the English Committee is not late. It is simply a paper sent in of advice with a good many qualifications. They have simply placed a recommendation before the Cabinet.

488. **Sir HORACE PLUNKETT**.—I am meeting the Committee on this question. It is possible that the Committee do not propose to give their final opinion as to the amount of the bonus that they propose to give in oats. Mr. Bagwell has shown me what is passing in his mind. If you will allow him to read what he has written upon it, it expresses my views.

489. **The CHAIRMAN**.—There is no question of arriving at a confirmation of the English minimum price. I asked the opinion of the Committee at the opening of this session upon the question of a minimum price, leaving the amount to be decided afterwards.

490. **Sir HORACE PLUNKETT**.—I must apologise. I was late in coming in. I did not know that that was your question. That makes my position clear. It makes all the difference.

491. **Mr. GILL**.—We know that the report of the English Committee recommends a minimum price, and that is a very important factor—a most vital factor for us—because in the first place if it is agreed upon to have a minimum price you cannot have a minimum price for England, not applicable to Ireland. The real question for us is how will that affect us. It is only a price for wheat, and it may be that the English Committee do not propose to recommend a minimum price for anything but wheat.

492. **Mr. BASTARA**.—They have not considered anything else.

493. **Mr. GILL**.—The Cabinet has to consider the whole question for the three kingdoms and what I think the Committee ought to do is to influence the Cabinet with regard to Ireland. If this Committee is of opinion that Ireland ought to concentrate on oats as England does on wheat then it will be for us to consider what ought to be the minimum price for oats. Here another complication comes in. If the English price for wheat is fixed at 45/- a quarter that would affect our minimum price for oats, because the price of oats must be fixed in relation to the price of wheat and therefore our hands are tied in fixing the price of oats if that price is adopted for English wheat. If we agree as to the minimum price the question is what will be the minimum price for oats.

494. **Sir HORACE PLUNKETT**.—The amount does not matter if we only make it for one year and not for four.

495. **The CHAIRMAN**.—That is not decided.

496. **Mr. O'NEILL**.—Once a farmer has embarked on this tillage he must continue it for at least two years.

497. **Sir HORACE PLUNKETT**.—I quite agree that if a minimum price is fixed in England for wheat that it must be fixed in Ireland for oats. I agree also with Mr. O'Neill that a guarantee for one year would not do.

498. **Mr. BORN**.—I would like the qualification that I have already expressed, that it should be the Government that is to decide on the necessity for this guarantee.

499. **The CHAIRMAN**.—That is agreed.

500. **Mr. O'CONNOR**.—The 45/- a quarter for wheat recommended by the English Committee works out at about 25/- per barrel of 20 stone. I suggest that is 24/- per stone for oats would be the minimum. This thing ought to be made as clear as possible for the farmers.

501. **Mr. McDONALD**.—In considering oats I think it is overlooked that there are two sorts of oats—white and black—and that there has always been a difference in price between the two. That should be borne in mind while fixing the minimum price.

502. **Mr. O'NEILL**.—In a general recommendation of this kind we really cannot take cognisance of small changes in value like this. At the present time there is no difference between white and black oats, and whatever difference exists is from 6d. to 9d. per barrel and we ought not to differentiate between the two.

503. **Mr. DOWD**.—In discussing this question of the minimum price I think that the time of the year at which it is to come into operation is very important. The minimum price in September or October would be very different from what it would be in March or April.

504. **Mr. O'NEILL**.—Mr. Burrell suggested yesterday that the minimum price should not come into operation until a certain fixed period and he suggested the 1st of February or the 1st of March.

505. **Mr. BASTARA**.—I am strongly in favour of a minimum price as against the suggestion of Mr. Murroughs of a bonus on acreage.

506. **Mr. GILL**.—There is a condition in the English Report that no farmer is to be entitled to get the minimum price unless he has increased his total tillage by one-fifth. The condition is that the total amount of the tillage is increased by one-fifth.

507. **Mr. BORN**.—I am in favour of the minimum price being fixed on the whole product of the country.

508. **Mr. O'CONNOR**.—That is my opinion also.

509. **The CHAIRMAN**.—I think it is impossible to conceive anything else than that the minimum price would affect the whole crop. I am asking the Committee to say nothing more at present than that they are in favour of the principle of a minimum price in this emergency for wheat and oats. If you allow me to say that we agree that a minimum price should be fixed for both crops that would be sufficient for the Chief Secretary. That is all I am asking you to agree to now.

510. **Mr. O'NEILL**.—There is this further question to be considered—that in all human probability the English Committee does not propose to make any recommendation with regard to a minimum price on oats. I think it would be necessary to point out that this Committee have come to the conclusion that the fixing of a minimum price on oats is essential and

what I would suggest is the argument to adduce in favour of that view is to point out the relative growth of the two cereals in this country.

511. The CHAIRMAN.—That I have done already. I will give him the figures as to wheat and oats.

512. Mr. BORN.—And add that in our opinion the minimum price should be looked upon not as a bonus but as an insurance against loss.

513. The CHAIRMAN.—My own opinion is quite clear that we have no business to fix a minimum price only for the protection of the farmer.

514. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I have written a draft note. My note is—"It was agreed that the Chairman should tell the Chief Secretary that if the Government decided upon a minimum price being guaranteed to English farmers to grow wheat a minimum price must also be guaranteed to Irish farmers to grow oats as well as wheat."

515. The CHAIRMAN.—That does not give any opinion—that does not assist the Government as to the opinion of this Committee.

516. Mr. O'NEILL.—That is no expression of opinion from this Committee. I think we ought to speak for Ireland here.

517. Mr. BARRIE.—I have written this:—"That if the Cabinet are of opinion that such action is called for, and with present information before us, we are of opinion that a substantial increase in food production in Ireland in 1916 can only be secured by offering our farmers a minimum price in wheat and oats harvested in that year; that oats must be included as our chief cereal crop. The Committee have not yet considered what an equitable minimum price would be."

518. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I don't want to say that the fixing of a minimum price is the only way of securing an increase of tillage. If we agree that it is the best way; perhaps Mr. Barrie would have no objection of making the alteration by substituting "best" for "only."

519. Mr. BARRIE.—Yes.

520. Most Rev. Dr. KELLY.—I don't think it is necessary for us to draft the precise words.

521. The CHAIRMAN.—What I object to in Sir Horace's note is that it is simply a record of the facts of the situation and gives the Cabinet no light or leading as to the views of the Committee.

522. Mr. BAGWELL.—We are practically making our report now. Whatever you write to the Chief Secretary we will not be in a position to differ from it afterwards if it goes now as our opinion.

523. Mr. O'CONNOR.—My note is—"That we are unanimous in agreeing to a minimum price for both wheat and oats for Ireland if it is regarded by the

Government as a necessity and as a means of increasing the area of tillage in Ireland."

524. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT.—I will agree to that.

525. Mr. BAGWELL.—I would not object to it.

526. Mr. BARRIE.—My note now reads—"That if the Cabinet are of opinion that such action is called for, and with present information before us, we desire to say that a substantial increase in food production in Ireland in 1916 can be best secured by offering our farmers a guarantee of a minimum price on wheat and oats harvested for that year. We consider oats must be included as our chief cereal crop. The Committee have not yet considered what the equitable minimum price should be."

527. Sir HORACE PLUNKETT and Mr. BAGWELL agreed to this note, as well as the other members of the Committee.

528. The CHAIRMAN.—I take it that Mr. Barrie's resolution is passed. Anything that is to go with it will go as what I think is the mind of the Committee but not necessarily as a formal resolution.

529. Mr. GILL.—I would add that the Committee is of opinion that the minimum price should be regarded as an insurance against loss and not as a bonus.

530. The CHAIRMAN.—We will consider our draft report on Wednesday week. I propose to deal with the minimum price as the principal part of the report. I propose to deal also with the question of the cattle trade and the report will simply amount to this, so far as I am concerned, that the new Act gives the Department complete power and that I don't think that any further interference would be justified. As to all the other points that have arisen I don't consider one of them as having a real bearing upon the present question. I must say that I was very much impressed by Mr. Wybberley's evidence yesterday, and I feel that as regards winter dairying there may be something to be had out of it.

531. Mr. O'NEILL.—Hear, hear.

532. The CHAIRMAN.—That is the position I have reached. I did see there for the first time some light for the dairying industry in Ireland. I don't intend to refer to that in the report because it could not come into operation in time and there would not be sufficient agreement to justify any reference to it. On the other point as to co-operation and machinery I shall take any paragraph that Sir Horace sends in and the Committee can discuss it on its own responsibility, but I don't feel justified in drawing it in as part of my draft report. If it is added by the Committee it will become part of the report.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

Statistical Statements and Tables specially prepared for the use of the Committee by the Statistics and Intelligence Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Statement I.

STATISTICS OF THE PRODUCTION AND DISPOSAL OF IRISH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

The following four tables should be considered together. Table I. shows the quantity and value of that part of each Irish agricultural product which is sold or consumed by the farmers and their families—the remainder as shown in Tables II., III. and IV. is used on the farms as food for farm stock, as seed, and to keep up the stock of farm equines. The values shown are the estimated values of the farms. The total output of any particular product, except whole milk, may be obtained by adding the figures that appear for that product in the tables. The total production of whole milk in 1912-13 is estimated at 643,000,000 gallons.

TABLE I.

Total estimated quantities and values of Irish Crops, Live Stock and Live Stock Products sold* or consumed by the farmers and their families in Ireland in the year 1912-13.

		QUANTITY.	VALUE.
CROPS.			£
Wheat	Cwts.	790,000	306,000
Oats	"	5,140,000	1,715,000
Barley	"	3,613,000	1,126,000
Beans	"	7,600	3,000
Peas	"	1,700	600
Potatoes	Tons.	1,495,000	6,102,000
Carrots	"	12,000	18,000
Pumpkins	"	7,000	22,000
Other Green Crops	"	—	66,000
Flax	Stones	3,073,000	855,000
Tow (undressed)	"	2,073,000	39,000
Hay	Tons.	217,500	743,000
Straw	"	15,000	27,000
Grass Seed	Cwts.	586,000	386,000
Fruit	"	—	320,000
Timber	Tons.	245,000	125,000
LIVE STOCK AND LIVE STOCK PRODUCTS.			
Cattle	No.	1,096,000	13,854,000
Butter	Cwts.	1,784,000	3,301,000
Whole Milk	Gals.	92,000,000	3,492,000
Butter and Separated Milk	"	220,000,000	687,000
" Fallen " Cattle Hides	No.	128,000	97,000
Pigs	"	1,656,000	7,790,000
Poultry	"	12,965,000	1,875,000
Eggs	Gt. Hds.	9,342,000	4,513,000
Feathers	Lbs.	2,985,000	67,000
Sheep	No.	1,378,000	2,875,000
Wool	Lbs.	15,530,000	696,000
Horses	No.	32,000	1,508,000
" Fallen " Horse Hides	"	10,000	7,000
Mules, Jennets and Asses	"	4,000	13,000
Goats	"	—	32,000
Honey	Lbs.	463,167	11,000
TOTAL VALUE	—	—	57,067,600

* For the purposes of this table, which is meant to show the total value of agricultural production in Ireland, increases in stocks at the end as compared with the beginning of the year have been treated as sales and added to the actual sales and consumption, decreases have been subtracted.

TABLE II.

ESTIMATED QUANTITIES AND VALUES OF IRISH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FED TO CATTLE, SHEEP, PIGS, POULTRY AND FARM EQUINES IN IRELAND IN 1912-13.

		QUANTITY.	VALUE.
			£
Oats	Cwts.	12,148,000	4,048,000
Barley	"	292,000	103,000
Rye	"	109,000	33,000
Screenings	"	1,302,000	258,000
Beans	"	22,000	9,000
Pease	"	1,000	500
Potatoes, Saleable	Tons	195,000	798,000
" Small	"	509,000	509,000
Turnips	"	3,783,000	1,852,000
Mangels and Beet	"	1,301,000	813,000
Field Cabbages	"	453,000	272,000
Rape	"	35,000	13,000
Vetches	"	25,000	15,000
Other Green Crops	"	—	189,000
Hay	"	4,857,000	13,161,000
Straw	"	1,630,000	2,885,000
Whole Milk	Gals.	44,000,000	982,000
Butter Milk and Separated Milk	"	307,000,000	359,000
TOTAL VALUE	—	—	26,906,800

TABLE III.

TOTAL ESTIMATED QUANTITIES AND VALUES OF IRISH AGRICULTURAL SEEDS (OTHER THAN GRASS SEEDS*) SOWN IN IRELAND IN 1912-13.

		QUANTITY.	VALUE.
			£
Wheat	Cwts.	48,000	19,000
Oats	"	1,817,000	628,000
Barley	"	246,000	108,000
Rye	"	10,000	3,000
Beans	"	2,000	800
Pease	"	300	100
Potatoes	Tons	348,000	1,362,000
TOTAL VALUE	—	—	2,120,800

* The total quantity and value of Grass Seeds sown in Ireland is shown in Table I.

TABLE IV.

The total number of Irish Equines broken in 1912-13 is obtained by adding to the figures for equines which appear in Table I. the following, which are the Estimated Number and Value of new Irish Equines put to agricultural work in Ireland in that year.

	No.	£
Horses	22,000	430,000
Mules, Jennets and Asses	19,000	43,000

Statement II.

ESTIMATE OF PRINCIPAL CROPS.—EXTENT, RATES OF PRODUCE, AND PRODUCE.

EXTENT.						
—	WHEAT.	OATS.	BARLEY.	POTATOES.	TURNIPS.	MANGELS.
	ACRES.	ACRES.	ACRES.	ACRES.	ACRES.	ACRES.
1912	44,853	1,046,000	165,367	596,184	271,771	81,700
1913	34,004	1,048,813	172,948	582,303	276,596	78,914
1914	34,915	1,028,753	172,289	583,069	276,832	81,570
ESTIMATED RATES OF PRODUCE PER STATUTE ACRE.						
—	WHEAT.	OATS.	BARLEY.	POTATOES.	TURNIPS.	MANGELS.
	cwt.	cwt.	cwt.	tons.	tons.	tons.
1912	18-7	18-3	18-8	4-3	13-9	15-9
1913	20-4	18-0	19-8	6-4	18-8	20-6
1914	20-5	17-6	20-1	5-9	16-0	19-2
ESTIMATED TOTAL PRODUCE.						
—	WHEAT.	OATS.	BARLEY.	POTATOES.	TURNIPS.	MANGELS.
	cwt.	cwt.	cwt.	tons.	tons.	tons.
1912	837,826	19,104,975	3,110,924	2,546,730	3,758,218	1,301,048
1913	693,837	18,886,651	3,430,363	3,739,346	5,186,292	1,628,514
1914	758,154	18,081,961	3,460,018	3,443,770	4,433,491	1,562,074

Statement III.

TABLE showing the distribution of the land in Ireland in 1912, 1913, and 1914.

Division of Land.	1912.	1913.	1914.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Corn Crops	1,965,687	1,263,963	1,247,000
Green Crops	1,022,089	1,009,481	1,015,406
Flax	55,062	59,306	49,238
Fruit	15,218	15,734	16,090
Hay	2,487,349	2,481,822	2,487,513
Grass	9,828,373	9,860,842	9,927,501
Mountain Land—			
Grazed	2,583,485	2,547,961	2,516,079
Barren	471,995	502,305	535,309
Woods and Plantations	295,735	297,809	306,400
Turf Bog	877,784	845,048	860,579
Marsh	363,229	389,462	368,574
Water, Roads, Towns, &c.	1,102,119	1,097,393	1,096,583
TOTAL OF IRELAND ...	20,371,125	20,371,125	20,371,125

Statement IV.

THE BREAKFAST TABLE COMMODITIES.

(Extract from the Vice-President's Address to the Council of Agriculture on 4th May, 1915.)

In view of the importance of the Food Supply and its development at the present juncture, and owing to the fact that for the first time I am able to utilise the figures derived from the Census of Production, I have thought this an opportune time for analysing some of the constituent figures of the Agricultural Income of Ireland, which for 1912-13 was estimated at £58,309,000. Of this sum no less than £25,614,000, or 45·5 per cent., was received in respect of butter, milk, pigs, eggs, and poultry. The value and percentage of the total income from each of these products was:—

	Value.	Percentage of Farmer's Income.
Butter	£ 8,201,000	16·3
Milk (assumed at such)	5,730,000	4·9
Total Butter and Milk ...	11,937,000	21·2
Pigs	7,730,000	12·9
Eggs	4,512,000	7·7
Poultry	1,875,000	2·6
Total Eggs and Poultry ...	5,387,000	10·5
Total Butter, Milk, Pigs, Eggs and Poultry.	25,614,000	45·5

This £25,614,000 includes the Irish produce consumed by Irish farmers and their families, and represents the income which they derive from what have been termed breakfast table commodities. Before these commodities reach our tables, or our ports for shipment to Great Britain, their cash value is, of course, largely increased by the bacon curers, the merchants, the railway companies, and all the other factors which constitute the machinery of distribution. More than half of them is consumed in Ireland. We consume about 57 per cent. of the butter, practically all of the milk, 37 per cent. of the pigs, 59 per cent. of the poultry, and 35 per cent. of the eggs. The remainder is exported to Great Britain.

The estimated value of the exports from Ireland of Butter, Eggs, Poultry, Live Pigs, Bacon and Hams in each of the last five years was:—

	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
Butter	£ 3,035,000	3,071,000	4,100,000	3,730,000	4,645,000
Eggs	2,744,000	2,940,000	2,807,000	3,019,000	3,284,000
Poultry	927,000	851,000	1,038,000	980,000	1,071,000
Total Eggs and Poultry ...	3,671,000	3,791,000	3,845,000	4,005,000	4,355,000
Live Pigs	1,330,000	1,302,000	1,302,000	1,094,000	737,000
Bacon and Hams	3,692,000	3,494,000	4,250,000	4,209,000	4,043,000
Total Live Pigs, Bacon, and Hams	5,024,000	4,806,000	5,552,000	5,303,000	4,800,000
Total Butter, Eggs, Poultry, Pigs, and Pig Products.	12,330,000	12,568,000	13,647,000	12,974,000	13,900,000

The fourteen million pounds sterling that Ireland thus receives for her breakfast table commodities at first sight appears a very respectable figure. It certainly is a very interesting one. But, after all, what does it amount to? Our surplus for export, after providing for home consumption, should be at least doubled. And this we could do for each item—our home consumption remaining the same—by providing 12 cows, 13 pigs and 237 poultry to the 100 acres of productive land, the stock being no better or no worse than we have now. At present we have only 9 cows, 8 pigs, and 148 poultry to the 100 acres. One weary of holding up the people of other wiser if not happier lands to show what is possible—Denmark, with 16 cows, 27 pigs, and 167 poultry to the 100 acres; Holland, with 35 cows, 19 pigs, but only 99 poultry; and so on. But there is much to be learned from what our own small farmers are doing. Irish farmers with 30 acres or less have as many as 15 cows, 15 pigs, and 366 poultry to the 100 acres of cropped and pasture lands, whereas our farmers with 100 acres or more have only 6 cows, 3 pigs, and 52 poultry. It may be objected that we might double the surplus of breakfast table commodities only at the expense of our cattle trade. Not at all. The small farmer, in addition to having two and a half times as many cows, five times as many pigs, and seven times as many poultry to the 100 acres as the large farmer, held exactly the same number of other cattle—25 to the 100 acres.

Someone may perhaps raise the point that these 23 other cattle on the small farms are younger and less valuable animals that require less food than the 23 on the large farms, and also that there are 36 sheep per 100 acres on the large farms to 19 on the small farms. This is quite true, but then look at the contrast in cows, pigs and poultry. I should explain that the figures show the large farmer in the most favourable light possible as the two-and-a-half million acres of rough grazed mountain lands, most of which are on the large holdings, have been left out of account in calculating the number of stock. In addition, it should be borne in mind that I am not contending that the large farmers should have as many cows, pigs and poultry to the 100 acres as the small farmers, nor that Ireland should have as many as Denmark or Holland, but I maintain that we should carry enough to permit us to double our export.

Again, it may be objected that farms with 30 acres or less are too small for purposes of comparison. Well, let us contrast farms under 50 acres and farms over 50 acres. The former carry 11 cows, 14 pigs and 285 poultry to the 100 acres, whereas the latter have only 8 cows, 5 pigs and 80 poultry. The former carry 23 other cattle and 19 sheep, the latter 23 other cattle and 31 sheep.

These contrasts, of course, get us back to the tillage question. The farmers with 30 acres or less have under crops 44 per cent., the farmer of over 100 acres only 22 per cent. of their cropped and pasture lands.

Our cows and poultry are increasing, but much too slowly. The cows have increased by only 6 per cent., and the poultry by 12 per cent. in the last five years. The number of our pigs fluctuates greatly and rapidly, going up one year and down the next, but the general tendency appears to be downwards. The average number on the 1st June of the four years, 1909 to 1913, was 1,300,000; for 1904-1907, 1,260,000; for 1908-1911, 1,246,000; and for 1912, 1913 and 1914, 1,350,000.

The capital value of the milk cows, pigs and poultry in Ireland on the 1st June, 1912, was £23,200,000, and the farmer's income from butter, milk, pigs and poultry in the following twelve months was £25,600,000, or 110 per cent. of the capital value. The capital value of cattle other than milk cows was £25,000,000, and the income from fat and store cattle only £13,100,000, or 52 per cent. of the capital value. The capital value of sheep was £5,400,000, and the income £3,500,000, or 65 per cent.

If pigs and poultry alone are considered, the capital value was only £4,700,000, whereas the income was £13,700,000, or 289 per cent. of the capital. Would it not be to our advantage to develop this safe business of breakfast table commodities which brings in such lucrative returns from a comparatively small outlay?

Great Britain can take all the butter, eggs, poultry, live pigs and bacon and hams we can supply her with. In 1913 in addition to paying Ireland £13,000,000 for these commodities, she paid foreign countries £55,000,000, and also paid her own producers something like £26,000,000, making a total payment of £94,000,000. Of this £94,000,000 producers in Great Britain received 27·7 per cent., Denmark 23·2 per cent., Ireland, 13·8 per cent., Russia 10·2 per cent., the United States of America 9·6 per cent., and all other countries 15·5 per cent. In 1913, Ireland received only £3,736,000 for her butter, whereas Denmark took £10,658,000, and Russia £3,831,000. As regards eggs, Ireland received £3,019,000, Russia £1,745,000 and Denmark £2,297,000. For live pigs, bacon and hams, Ireland got only £3,323,000, while Denmark got £8,870,000, and the United States £8,838,000.

And not only are we not taking advantage of this huge market at our doors, but we are actually allowing the foreigner a substantial slice of the home market. Ireland imported butter, eggs, poultry, bacon, and hams to the value of £2,580,000 in 1914 and £2,650,000 in 1913. The imports of bacon and hams amounted to £2,069,000 in 1914 and £2,133,000 in 1913. The butter imported was valued at £466,000 in 1914 and £485,000 in 1913.

Statement V.

NUMBERS OF THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF CATTLE, SHEEP, AND PIGS IN IRELAND
ON 1st JUNE, 1912, 1913, AND 1914.

CATTLE.

Year.	Bulls	Milk Cows	Heifers- to- Calf	Other Cattle.			Total Number of Cattle
				Two years old and upwards	One year old and under two year	Under one year	
1912	34,325	1,508,062	80,324	983,048	1,071,485	1,100,654	4,848,498
1913	34,545	1,535,517	71,703	1,021,422	1,109,681	1,161,757	4,903,625
1914	32,538	1,548,790	80,139	1,060,645	1,141,461	1,138,072	5,061,645

SHEEP.

Year.	Sheep kept for breeding purposes		Other Sheep		Total Number of Sheep
	Brams	Ewes	One year old and upwards	Under one year	
1912	49,106	1,515,024	710,962	1,554,647	3,828,829
1913	44,586	1,411,770	686,773	1,494,586	3,650,724
1914	45,970	1,408,282	673,407	1,473,943	3,600,581

PIGS.

Year.	Pigs kept for breeding purposes		Other Pigs		Total Number of Pigs
	Brams	Sows	Six months old and upwards	Under Six months	
1912	1,889	130,842	176,865	1,014,363	1,323,957
1913	1,696	108,410	133,783	819,471	1,060,360
1914	1,636	133,188	173,316	696,696	1,305,636

Statement VI.

NUMBER OF BREEDING STOCK IN IRELAND IN THE YEARS 1910-14
AND ESTIMATED ANNUAL PRODUCTION IN 1912-13.

BREEDING STOCK ON 1ST JUNE.				ESTIMATED ANNUAL PRODUCTION IN 1912-13.		
—	CATTLE.					
	Bulls.	Milch Cows and Heifers- in-Calf.				
1910	30,034	1,557,584	Cattle exported alive or slaughtered in Ireland.	No.	1,094,000	
1911	32,637	1,565,418				
1912	34,325	1,595,986	Butter	Cwts.	1,764,000	
1913	34,546	1,605,220	Whole Milk left for con- sumption by persons.	Galls.	82,000,000	
1914	32,836	1,638,929				
SHEEP.						
—	Rams.	Ewes.				
1910	48,343	1,580,519	Sheep and lambs exported alive or slaughtered in Ireland.	No.	1,378,000	
1911	50,147	1,523,107				
1912	49,106	1,515,024				
1913	44,596	1,411,770				
1914	45,970	1,408,262				
PIGS.						
—	Borns.	Bows.				
1910	1,779	129,787	Pigs exported alive or slaughtered in Ireland.	No.	1,656,000†	
1911	2,113	149,315				
1912	1,880	130,842				
1913	1,696	106,410				
1914	1,938	133,188				
STOCK POULTRY.*						
—	Males.	Females.				
1910	1,069,000	12,898,000	Poultry exported alive or slaughtered in Ireland.	No.	12,965,000	
1911	1,130,000	13,392,000				
1912	1,121,000	13,417,000	Eggs	Gt. Hds.	9,342,000	
1913	1,109,000	13,283,000				
1914	1,140,000	13,671,000				

* Estimated.

† No. of Pigs exported alive or slaughtered in Ireland have been estimated at:—

in 1910	...	1,783,000.
1911	...	2,011,000.
1912	...	2,090,000.
1913	...	1,705,000.
1914	...	1,218,000.

Statement VII.

TABLE showing the numbers of Farm Horses, Farm Implements, Machines, etc., used in Agriculture in 1912.

	NUMBERS		
	On Holdings under 30 Acres	On Holdings over 30 Acres.	Total.
Horses used for Agricultural Purposes	142,148	240,015	382,163
Carts	210,165	249,409	459,574
Ploughs :—			
Single Furrow	110,753	166,260	257,013
Two or more Furrows	166	13,259	13,425
Drill	33,432	59,909	91,841
Harrow :—			
Ordinary Fixed Tooth	103,868	128,260	232,128
Spring Tooth	6,896	30,085	36,981
Disc	90	1,829	1,919
Chain	2,649	13,537	16,186
Saddle	4,298	12,156	16,454
Cultivators and Grubbers	44,474	75,863	120,337
Horse Hoes	3,148	19,603	22,751
Land Rollers	38,594	78,354	116,948
Mammee Distributors	91	1,701	1,792
Thistle Cutters	104	1,758	1,862
Potato Sprayers :—			
Knapsack	25,166	34,619	59,785
Horse	328	2,445	2,773
Seed Sowing Machines :—			
Grain Broadcast and Drill (Horse)	587	9,344	9,931
Turnips and Mangels	7,530	44,461	52,011
Harvesting Machinery :—			
Mowers and Reapers	19,142	77,624	96,766
Binders	257	9,137	9,394
Swathe Turners and Tedders	1,568	16,843	18,411
Rakes (Horse)	8,328	57,269	65,597
Rick Lifters	1,046	9,634	10,680
Potato Diggers	1,403	7,263	8,666
Barn Machinery :—			
Ordinary Thrashers	8,090	21,622	29,712
Thrasher and Finisher combined	317	1,634	1,951
Winnowers or Fanners	14,433	34,074	48,507
Food Preparing Machinery :—			
Root Shers and Pulpers	28,379	74,815	103,194
Chaff Cutters	5,642	21,516	27,158
Corn Crushers	560	6,096	6,656
Cream Separators	664	7,758	8,422
Mechanical Motor Power Used on the Farm :—			
Water Wheels or Turbines	96	568	664
Windmills	10	106	116
Steam Engines :—			
No.	91	709	800
H.P.	604	4,981	4,985
Gas Engines :—			
No.	8	77	85
H.P.	69	862	931
Oil Engines :—			
No.	34	631	665
H.P.	231	3,377	3,598
Petrol Engines :—			
No.	8	84	92
H.P.	28	379	407

Statement VIII.

Persons or Persons actively engaged in farm work as defined in Act, 1933, or those under 20 years and on farms of 20 acres and over.

Persons Employed in Agriculture	On Farms under 20 Acres			On Farms of 20 Acres and over.			Total on all Farms.		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Members of Families.—									
Under 16 years —	54,871	51,180	106,051	54,359	17,508	71,867	109,230	68,688	177,918
16 years and over —	204,753	104,001	308,754	192,280	19,777	212,057	403,978	183,689	587,667
Total —	259,624	155,181	414,805	246,639	37,285	283,924	513,208	252,377	765,585
Other Permanent Labourers —									
Under 16 years —	3,355	1,894	5,249	3,607	1,558	5,165	12,893	3,452	16,345
16 years and over —	21,637	1,305	22,942	108,899	13,798	122,697	121,592	15,250	136,842
Total —	25,002	3,199	28,201	112,506	15,356	127,862	134,485	18,702	153,187
Temporarily Employed —									
Under 16 years —	1,401	1,368	2,769	1,199	2,567	3,766	2,597	3,934	6,531
16 years and over —	65,732	3,348	69,080	64,639	1,108	65,747	67,237	13,162	80,400
Total —	67,133	4,716	71,849	65,838	3,675	69,513	70,034	17,096	87,130
Trucks —									
Under 16 years —	65,651	50,505	116,156	54,688	26,541	81,229	116,119	54,044	170,163
16 years and over —	363,361	119,597	482,958	365,728	75,716	441,444	482,480	133,838	616,318
Grand Total —	429,012	169,902	598,914	420,416	102,257	522,673	600,600	187,882	788,482

Statement IX.

TOTAL VALUE of FISH returned as landed on the Irish Coasts during each of the last five years.

—				Shell Fish.	Other Fish.	Total Fish.
				£	£	£
1910	...	...	...	59,130	316,500	375,630
1911	...	...	...	58,406	316,679	374,085
1912	...	...	...	60,551	306,786	367,337
1913	...	...	...	63,922	294,635	358,547
1914	...	...	...	67,854	238,636	296,489

TOTAL QUANTITY of FISH other than Shell Fish returned as landed on Irish Coasts during each of the last five years.

				Cwt.
1910	...	...	...	1,061,551
1911	...	...	...	869,484
1912	...	...	...	894,144
1913	...	...	...	676,592
1914	...	...	...	580,995

Statement X.

ALLOCATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL SCHEMES.

Table 100—(a) The per-acre rate for Agricultural Schemes in the different Provinces during the past five years, the estimated amount to be borne by the rates, and the estimated amount to be provided out of the Department's funds.

(b) The amount of grant available out of current rate for Agricultural Schemes, and

(c) The estimated amount that would in addition be available at a rate of 12 pence applied in all counties.

Province.	1914-15			1915-16			1916-17			1917-18			1918-19			Amount available from current rate for Agricultural Schemes.	Additional amount of rate available at 12 pence with effect in every County.
	Total Allowance for Agricultural Schemes.	Payable from Rates.	Repayable from Department's Funds.	Total Allowance for Agricultural Schemes.	Payable from Rates.	Repayable from Department's Funds.	Total Allowance for Agricultural Schemes.	Payable from Rates.	Repayable from Department's Funds.	Total Allowance for Agricultural Schemes.	Payable from Rates.	Repayable from Department's Funds.	Total Allowance for Agricultural Schemes.	Payable from Rates.	Repayable from Department's Funds.		
ULSTER	26,427	16,626	9,801	27,526	11,275	16,251	26,515	11,627	14,888	26,227	11,547	14,680	26,221	16,041	10,180	6,205	1,526
MUNSTER	21,294	7,942	13,352	22,177	8,221	13,956	21,505	6,605	14,900	22,226	8,111	14,115	22,528	14,527	11,561	6,750	1,224
LEINSTER	26,445	11,416	15,029	26,908	10,226	16,682	27,324	10,750	16,574	28,026	11,571	16,455	28,207	14,771	13,436	9,126	1,840
CONSUMMENT	22,143	4,668	17,475	22,569	4,227	18,342	24,756	2,945	21,811	18,280	4,561	13,719	22,611	4,726	17,885	3,476	—
IRELAND	96,314	36,150	60,164	100,277	35,923	64,354	99,299	36,149	63,150	100,026	36,955	63,071	100,000	51,561	45,602	26,557	4,590

A penny rate is levied in all counties except the following:—

ULSTER { Antrim, 2d
Down, 1d

MUNSTER { Cork, 2d
Limerick, 1d

LEINSTER { Dublin, 2d
Kildare, 1d

APPENDIX II.

OPINIONS OF COUNTY COMMITTEES OF AGRICULTURE.

At the first Deliberative Conference of the Committee it was decided (see Deliberative Conference, paragraphs 36, 85, and 120 to 131), to obtain the opinions of the County Committees of Agriculture on the subject of the Inquiry. Accordingly the following letter and queries were addressed to the Chairman of each County Committee of Agriculture. The replies of the Committees are appended.

COMMITTEE ON FOOD PRODUCTION IN IRELAND.

OFFICES:—4 UPPER MERRION STREET,
DUBLIN, 15th July, 1915.

SIR,

I beg to acquaint you that a Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland has been appointed "to consider and report what steps should be taken, by legislation or otherwise, for the sole purpose of maintaining, and if possible increasing, the present production of food in Ireland, on the assumption that the war may be prolonged beyond the harvest of 1916."

From the terms of reference, and in the very urgent circumstances, it will be obvious that an early report by the Committee will be expected, and that this consideration will necessarily limit the opportunity of the Committee of obtaining views and information on the subject of the Inquiry through the usual methods of taking evidence.

My Committee especially desire to have the opinions of the County Committees of Agriculture of the County Councils, as the statutory local bodies appointed to deal with schemes of agricultural development, and to give these opinions careful consideration. To facilitate this object, I am directed to send herewith a list of questions upon some of the chief issues on which it is desired to have the views of the County Committees.

In view of the great urgency of this matter, my Committee venture to hope that you will summon a special meeting of your County Committee to consider it at the earliest practicable date.

A supply of copies of the list of questions for distribution to the members of your Committee is forwarded herewith.

Your obedient Servant,

E. A. M. MORRIS,

Secretary of Committee.

To the Chairman,
County Committee of Agriculture.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION.

1. How can the diminution of breeding stock in Ireland be counteracted:—

- (a) By prohibition of slaughter and export of breeding and immature animals; and, if such prohibition is recommended, under what circumstances and to what classes of animals should it be applied;
- (b) By inducements to keep breeding and immature animals in the country?

2. How can the cultivation of an increased amount of crops be best encouraged:—

- (a) As regards corn crops;
- (b) Potatoes;
- (c) Fodder crops?

3. What percentage of increase in these several classes of crops would be possible in your county. . . . ?

REPLIES OF COUNTY COMMITTEES OF AGRICULTURE.

Province of Leinster.

CARLOW.

Special meeting of County Carlow Committee for Agriculture held in Court-house, Carlow, on Monday, 25th July, 1915, for the purpose of considering the best means to be adopted for purpose of maintaining, and if possible increasing, the present production of food in Ireland.

1. It was decided (two members dissenting, two not voting) that the diminution of breeding and immature animals can best be counteracted by offering inducements to breeders, particularly the smaller farmers.

2. It was unanimously agreed that, in order to increase the corn crops in county, a minimum price should be fixed. The area under these crops cannot to any appreciable extent be increased unless a minimum price is fixed, this to apply to cereals for a number of years.

Increased produce per acre is possible by adopting better cultural methods, and the proper selection of seed.

3. Could not state the percentage of increase.

25th July, 1915.

DUBLIN.

At a special meeting of the Committee held on 25th July, 1915, the following replies to the queries were passed:—

1. (a) That visibly "in-calf" cows should not be exported for at least two years.

(b) No answer decided upon.

2. (a) That as to wheat, a minimum price of 25/- per barrel of 50 stone be fixed for a period of four years. That as to oats, a minimum price of 15/- per barrel of 14 stone be fixed for a similar period.

(b) No answer drafted.

(c) By an increased cultivation of green fodder for the maintenance of stock, more especially in winter months.

3. No answer drafted.

28th July, 1915.

KILDARE.

At a special meeting of the Committee on 27th July the following replies to the queries were agreed upon:—

1. (a) Committee recommend that the slaughter of in-calf animals be prohibited in every possible way.

(b) Committee recommend that increased prices be given at Shows throughout the country for mature stock.

2. Committee recommend that Winter Shows of all farm produce be held in every county, and that a minimum price be fixed for wheat and oats.

3. Taking into consideration the labour available, the Committee believe that as regards all crops an increase of 10 per cent. would be possible. Towards this end the Committee would recommend that the Rural District Councils be asked to insist on all labourers' plots under their control being tilled, and also that the Department's Scheme of Loans for the purchase of Agricultural Implements be revived.

27th July, 1915.

KILKENNY.

At the meeting on the 26th July, the following resolutions were adopted:—

"We recognise that the export of immature and young cattle below the age of 14 years, is detrimental to the cattle-breeding interests of the county. We

recommend that a subsidy towards keeping all female stock up to 24 years old be given by the Department as an inducement to breeders."

"We consider that, owing to the difficulty of obtaining labour, a bonus from the Government is essential to the development of tillage, or, as an alternative, the Government guarantee a minimum selling price for corn, and the Scheme of Loans for purchase of Agricultural Machinery be continued."

"That in our opinion the percentage of increase in the several classes of crops in County Kilkenny would depend largely on the inducements referred to in foregoing resolutions."

25th July, 1915.

KING'S COUNTY.

The following resolutions were proposed and passed unanimously:—

That the King's County Committee of Agriculture is of opinion:—

1. There should be no restriction whatever on the export of live stock;

2. Minimum prices of 30/- per barrel for wheat, 20/- per barrel for barley, 15/- for oats, and 6d. per stone for potatoes should be guaranteed by the Treasury in connection with the harvest of 1915;

3. Facilities should be provided for the obtaining, or hiring, of labour-saving machinery.

"We wish to draw the attention of the Food Production Committee to the steadily high ratio of tillage in this county, and especially to the large increase in wheat oats and potatoes grown in the present season, notwithstanding the scarcity of labour. We are, moreover, of opinion that if the grass ranches in the county were broken up the total area under tillage would be increased by at least 50 per cent. In view of the urgency of the matter we consider the Estates Commissioners should take immediate action in the matter, and hereby direct the Secretary to send copies of this resolution to the Estates Commissioners and to Mr. John Redmond."

2nd July, 1915.

LONGFORD.

The following suggestions were unanimously adopted by Committee:—

1. That Parliament prohibit slaughter, and export, of all breeding animals until 1st January, 1917; also all female immature animals likely to be suitable for breeding purposes.

2. That Department permit Committee to expend money on providing machinery for reaping, sowing, harvesting, and manufacture of crops for food.

3. That the Agricultural Inspector devote the two first weeks in September to lecturing in various centres on Cattle Crops, and encourage by every means their growth throughout this county.

31st July, 1915.

LOUTH.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. (a) The total prohibition for exportation of milch cows and in-calf heifers.

(b) The free importation of calves from prescribed districts in Great Britain.

(No recommendation made in respect of sheep or pigs).

2. The establishment, under control of County Committees, of up-to-date agricultural machinery depots, to be placed at the disposal of farmers at fixed rates.
3. A further appreciable development generally.

(Also decided to recommend a more strenuous application of the Agricultural Seeds Act).

28th July, 1915.

MEATH.

The following recommendations were made by the Committee, viz. :—

1. (a) The Committee recommend the prohibition of slaughter of cows and heifers obviously in-calf, and that immature animals under one year of age be not exported or slaughtered.
- (b) They recommend that, in order to encourage breeding, the Department should confine their purchases of pure-bred live stock, especially bulls, to this country.
2. They recommend that a bonus be given for every extra acre of land broken up for tillage, and that the carrying companies be obliged to carry manures from the cities to the country at largely reduced rates, so as to encourage farmers to break up the land.
3. If the foregoing recommendation be adopted, the Committee believe that the percentage of increase in tillage will be very large.

21st July, 1915.

QUEEN'S COUNTY.

The Committee agreed upon the answers subjoined, viz. :—

1. Whilst we are opposed to the slaughter of breeding animals, we consider that any interference with export would be disastrous to the Irish cattle trade, and also to the breeding of stock.
2. By a Government bonus of £1 per acre on the acreage sown, and by a preference to home-grown produce being shown by the Government in securing their supplies.
3. Twenty per cent.

4th August, 1915.

WESTMEATH.

The following replies were agreed upon :—

1. Enforcement of the Slaughter of Animals (Ireland) Order, 1915.
2. As an inducement to keep breeding animals in the country, that first prizes value £16, and second prizes value £5 be offered for competition in two classes (A and B) in each of the seven districts into which this county is divided for the purpose of the Farm Prize Scheme, to farmers who keep cows; valuation of exhibitors in Class A not to exceed £50, and in Class B £25. Number, quality, general management of cows to form basis on which awards would be made.
3. Prizes for brood cows under conditions as set out in 2.
4. Fix minimum price for grain.
5. Government be asked to advance sufficient money to enable Department to revive Scheme of Loans for purchase of agricultural implements.
6. Government be asked to appeal to large land-owners to let for cropping to small farmers and others portion of the land which would in the ordinary course be let for grazing.
7. That Department recommend Committees of Agriculture to employ itinerant Village Demonstrators in counties where Village Demonstrators have not been already employed.

Meeting considered that the acreage under oats in this county could be increased 35 per cent.

Meeting consider that the Department, through its Committees of Agriculture, would, as far as practicable, be the authority to put in operation any of the above suggestions adopted by the Committee on Food Production.

20th July, 1915.

WEXFORD.

FOOD PRODUCTION COMMITTEE.

The Committee considered the circular issued by the Food Production Committee as to breeding stock and cultivation of increased crops.

After considerable discussion, the following resolution was adopted, on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Edmunds :—

"We consider that a substantial increase should be made in the number of bull premiums, and that the service fee in all cases should not be more than 1/- per cow."

Mr. Edmunds proposed :—

"That the Department be requested to prohibit the shipment of all female stock suitable for breeding for a period of at least six months."

This proposal was not seconded.

Mr. Devereux proposed :—

"That the Department be requested to prohibit the exportation of all cows and heifers in calf."

Rev. M. Hickey seconded. Passed unanimously.

On the motion of Mr. Devereux, seconded by Mr. Edmunds, the following resolution was adopted :—

"That the Veterinary Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction should be requested by the Food Production Committee to vary Article 2 of the Slaughter of Animals (Ireland) Order of 1915 to provide for the prohibition of the slaughter of calves under the age of 20 weeks."

On the motion of Mr. Edmunds, seconded by Mr. Devereux, the following resolution was adopted :—

"This Committee considers that farmers can be best encouraged to produce an increased amount of grain crops by informing the Wexford farmers of the amount of increase which can be reasonably expected from them, and offering them substantial inducements conditional on that increase of area being produced. The present harvest year should be taken as the standard year as regards area. The inducements might be as follows :—

1. Future exemption from War taxation if the county produces the stipulated increase of area.
2. Exemption of tillage farms from local taxation; tillage farms to be regarded as those which have at least 25 per cent. of arable land under cultivation—first-crop meadows to be considered as a tillage crop.
3. A bonus on the area of grain crop exceeding the amount of area under the same for standard year.
4. A guarantee that, if the Government fix a selling price for wheat, it shall not be less than 25/- per barrel (of 25 stone) in Ireland.
5. We consider the Government should afford facilities to farmers to procure up-to-date machinery by inducing Joint Stock Banks to lend money to Co-operative Societies on their Corporate security.

21st July, 1915.

WICKLOW.

The following answers were agreed upon :—

1. (a) Yes. Cows and heifers in-calf and calves under 12 months old, also store lambs, half-bred and draught mares in-calf.
- (b) The Department should subsidize persons compelled through necessity to sell the above animals.

2. Already a large increase has appeared in the area under growing crops, and the growers in future require guarantee from the Department that remunerative prices will be given for the produce and assistance provided where necessary for seeds and implements.

3. Further increase is impossible, owing to the dearth of labour, unless the difficulty is removed by the use of improved machinery.

28th July, 1915.

Province of Ulster.

ANTRIM.

No replies received.

ARMAIGH.

In reply to the questions submitted for consideration, the Committee recommend—

1. That dropped calves be purchased in England, retained there for three weeks, and sent to this county for sale, it being understood that numbers are slaughtered, realising a very small price; whereas good calves three weeks old would sell freely at £3 each best. Any number could be disposed of to County Armagh farmers at that price.

2. That more intensive methods of cultivation be adopted rather than increased tillage.

CAVAN.

As the Report of the Committee on Food Production in Ireland was before the meeting, it was considered too late to make suggestions, and the matter was, therefore, allowed to drop.

8th September, 1916.

DONEGAL.

With reference to question No. 1 (a), the Committee decided to state that they are in favour of the prohibition by legislation, if it can be effectively carried out, of the slaughter and export of breeding and immature animals. The Committee consider that it would be difficult to carry out such legislation effectively, especially in rural districts.

As regards question No. 1 (b), the Committee is of opinion that inducements should also be held out to farmers to keep breeding and immature animals in the country, and, in this connection, they beg to bring before the Food Production Committee the following scheme for "Encouraging the breeding of Dairy Cattle," adopted at a meeting held on the 15th July, 1915, which the Committee is convinced would greatly help to achieve the desired object, while it would also encourage Winter Dairying, which is so much required in this country, but of which they have been unable to obtain the approval of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland to, although it has been put before them several times, viz. :—

Scheme.

We recommend—

Fourteen centres for examination of heifers in-calf or to-calve between 15th September and 15th December, continuation to be held from September 15th to October 15th.

That each centre will receive a premium of £1 to the extent of 50 for every heifer passed by the judge on merit. Should any centre not utilise the full number of premiums, then the premiums not taken up may be allocated to any other centre that exhibits more heifers of merit than their proportion.

If the full number of premiums are taken up, this will amount to £280, and we respectfully ask the Department to grant a subsidy of this amount for two years, at the end of which time we are fully persuaded the benefits of the scheme will be so manifest to our farmers that it will be self-supporting.

The Committee is satisfied that, unless some such scheme is adopted, Winter Dairying will be indefinitely delayed.

It shall also be a condition and of the essence of the scheme that no heifer receiving a premium shall be sold or go out of Ireland for six months after receiving each premium.

It was at first proposed by the Committee that each heifer receiving a premium should be branded or marked, and that the owners of these heifers that prove in-calf in the following year should also be awarded £1, but, in order to meet the cost of the scheme as small as possible, they eliminated this part.

The reasons given by the Department for not approving of the scheme were :—

- (1) Want of funds.
- (2) That the cost of administering the scheme would probably amount to a considerable sum, and
- (3) That the only source from which funds for such a project could be obtained was the allocation for the Live Stock Schemes in the County, and, as the amount for this purpose was limited, it was undesirable to reduce the number of Premiums for Bulls and Bows or Nominations for Mares heretofore awarded by the Committee.

The Committee consider that, in the present crying necessity to keep all the young breeding stock in the country, and at the same time impose as little hardship as possible on the owners, that Parliament should provide the funds for the carrying out of such a scheme in each county in Ireland, and they trust that the Food Production Committee will recommend them to do so.

In regard to question No. 2, the Committee beg to say, first, that mixed farming is always largely carried out in this county; secondly, that there is this year a considerable increase in the acreage under the crops mentioned; and, thirdly, that the Committee believe that, if the farmers are assured of satisfactory prices, they can be relied on to still further increase the area of land under these crops, so far as their means permit them to do so.

In some districts of the county where there is less tillage than in the rest of the county, the farmers are handicapped by the want of up-to-date machinery, the price of which is out of the means of most of them. The holdings are not large, but our Agricultural Instructor reports that machinery would be more extensively used on many of them. It would be very desirable that machinery should be brought within the means of such farmers. This might be done by (1) establishing through the County Committees depots from which machines could be hired out, and (2) by holding out inducements to small farmers to join in co-partnership in the purchase of any of the newer farm implements that they require.

Re question No. 3, we consider that 10 per cent. increase in tillage would be possible in most of the county, and possibly 20 or 25 per cent. in a couple of districts.

As to the general question as to how the present production of food in Ireland is to be maintained and, if possible, increased, we beg to inform the Food Production Committee that we have just this day received a letter from the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, stating that, owing to the depletion of funds consequent on the War, they find it necessary to reduce the annual contribution heretofore made in respect of the schemes administered by this Committee by a sum of £280, and we beg to point out that the withdrawal of such an amount from our already too limited income will greatly curtail the useful work being done by us, and tend to the reduction, instead of the increase, of the production of food.

We strongly urge on the Food Production Committee to represent to Parliament that it would be disastrous at the present grave crisis to allow the work of the Department and County Committees of Agriculture to be curtailed for want of funds, and that, in place of cutting down, additional funds to what have heretofore been available should be provided.

DOWN.

The Committee arrived at the following conclusions :

We are of opinion that any more drastic regulations than those at present in existence, viz., cows in-calf and calves under twelve weeks old not allowed to be slaughtered, would injure the cattle trade of the country. We recommend that the Department should use every possible means to breed from suitable heifers.

The present price of oats and wheat should be a sufficient inducement to extra cultivation where the pasture is poor, but we question the advisability of breaking up rich old permanent grass.

Potatoes are largely cultivated in County Down, a larger number being raised than in the whole province of Connaught, but they are sometimes too frequently grown on the same land. This year the price in Downpatrick was as low as 2s. per cwt., and in Cork the retail price at the same time was 10s. We are of opinion that the Department should publish the prices at different centres, so that the growers would know where to find the best markets, and thereby induce them to grow a larger area.

As to fodder crops, the more general use of artificial dressings, especially on second crop of hay and meadow, would materially increase the yield.

In a sheepy cultivated county like Down it is difficult to estimate the possible increased cultivation the present prices may bring about, the scarcity of labour being the chief difficulty in the way, and flax is largely grown in the county.

30th July, 1915.

FERRMANAGH.

The following answers were given:—

1. (a) The Committee does not consider it advisable to interfere with the exports of cattle.
- (b) We urge upon the Department of Agriculture the urgent necessity of removing the detention Order upon cows landing in England from this county, as it prevents the export of cased cows, and lowers Ireland the number of calves which would otherwise be kept in the country.

2 and 3. The Committee have done all in their power to increase the tillage area of this county since the outbreak of the war, and are satisfied that owing to the scarcity of labour nothing more could be done to increase the several classes of crops referred to.

LONDONDERRY.

1. (a) Committee are pleased to learn that Parliament has passed legislation giving power to the Irish Department of Agriculture to prohibit the slaughter of animals in-calf or in-pig, and calves under the age of twelve weeks. Such legislation commends itself to, and meets with the approval of the Committee.

Committee consider that the export from Ireland of animals in-calf or in-pig should be prohibited.

- (b) Committee consider that no legislative action is necessary.
2. (a) By providing a better quality of seed.
- (b) By guaranteeing the supply of artificial manures at prices current in recent years, i.e., prior to the outbreak of war.

3. Practically none in area, but possibly some in quantity by better cultivation.

Supplementary questions put to the Committee by the Chairman (Mr. Hugh T. Barrie, M.P.), and replies:—

1. If no Government action is taken, will tillage again show an increase next season?—Very little, if any.
2. Is there a danger of a shrinkage owing to want of confidence in the future course of prices, and scarcity of labour?—There is some slight danger of shrinkage on account of the scarcity of labour.
3. If the Government should decide to offer an inducement, what form should it take?—The continuance of good prices would be a sufficient inducement.

30th July, 1915.

MONAGHAN.

No reply.

TYRONE.

The following answers were drafted for reply to the queries from the Food Production Committee:—

1. (a) The Committee believe that there is no shortage of cattle in Tyrone. They regret that they were not supplied with the Government statistics for County Tyrone in order to test them. There are more cattle in Tyrone at present than can be fed there by any means within the powers of the farmers, and therefore any prohibition of export would be injurious, but the slaughter of cows and heifers in-calf ought, under the present exceptional circumstances, to be prohibited, with advantage.

- (b) We consider the high prices and the prospects of continued demand sufficient inducement.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

An increased number of cows and heifers ought to be served this season so as to make up any deficiency and keep up a well-regulated supply of stores.

Farmers who are having heifers served could keep a slightly increased stock over what they could if the stock were intended for fattening. That there will be a demand is practically assured.

Farmers are specially advised to serve heifers and cows with only the best bulls available, and to bear in mind that breeding from inferior bulls will seriously affect the future stores and trade.

We would also advise the breeding on an increased scale of such quickly maturing stock as sheep, pigs, and poultry.

2. (a) The current movement of prices offer sufficient encouragement. There is already more tillage in this county than in most others, and it is increasing, but under the special circumstances of the moment efforts should be made to induce owners and occupiers of inferior grass land to break it up and grow oats.
- (b) Increase continues in this county, and will naturally follow increase of corn crops.
- (c) Will follow increase in the corn crops and increased profits on cattle.

N.B.—For the profitable cultivation of increased area of all these crops an abundant supply of artificial manures at moderate prices will be necessary, and due steps to secure this—such as the prohibition of the export of bones or any phosphate raw material, sulphate of ammonia, any organic nitrogenous raw material—blood, bones, etc.—would be very beneficial.

More farmyard manure is also necessary, and facilities, such as cheap loans, might with advantage be given to farmers to provide housing for cattle, so as to concentrate the manure without involving much extra labour, special precautions being taken to avoid waste of the liquid manure.

3. Feasible or desirable increase in this county:—

Corn crops, 10 to 15 per cent.

Potatoes, 4 or 5 per cent. (It is now a great potato-growing and export county).

Fodder crops will follow corn.

N.B.—One of the difficulties apprehended as regards corn crops is the scarcity of labour for harvesting, and the rate of pay for which the assistance of the military is offered is higher than farmers can afford to pay.

Province of Munster.

CLARE.

The views of the Committee are as follows:—

- (a) Committee approve of prohibition of slaughter and export of breeding and immature animals.
- (b) Committee are of opinion that prohibition should apply to all cows in-calf and heifers in-calf except where the latter are expressly destined for slaughter when served. The export of yearlings should be permitted where it is a recognised trade, and essential to the prosperity of districts where it has been going on for years.
- (c) Committee do not think there is necessity to prohibit the export of breeding sheep, but do think there should be a restriction on the slaughter of calves and lambs.
- (d) Committee think if special prices were given at local shows for breeding and immature animals, it would be an inducement to keep such animals in the country.
- (e) Committee consider the cultivation of an increased amount of tillage can best be encouraged by assisting farmers, particularly the smaller ones, by supplying them with manures, seeds, etc., at reduced prices, and by sending extremely practical instructions throughout the country during the coming winter and spring.
- (f) Committee also suggest the advisability of utilising the lands at present in the hands of the Congested Districts Board for tillage purposes until such lands are divided up.
- (g) Committee consider there has been an increase of 25 per cent. this current year in corn, fodder crops and potatoes, but there is still room for a further increase.

CORK.

1. The Committee recommended that there should be no restriction on the export of breeding or any kind of animal to the United Kingdom.
2. No action was taken as to queries 2 and 3.

31st July, 1915.

KERRY.

1. Committee consider that the question of the disposal of their cattle should be left in the farmers' own hands. They also consider that, in order to improve the standard and increase the number of cattle in the country, a greater number of premium bulls should be available, and the purchasing price of these animals should be cheaper than at present.
2. (a) In order to induce farmers to grow more corn crops for home consumption, loans should be granted for the purchase and erection of

grinding mills in districts where these do not already exist; the Department's scheme of loans for the purchase of labour-saving machinery, corn blenders, etc., should be continued, and the Department should give seed corn to farmers under £20 valuation at half price.

- (b) That the Department be asked to take the necessary steps to procure reliable imported seed potatoes and sell to farmers at cost price.
- (c) Committee wish to express their pleasure that the farmers in County Kerry have carried out the Department's suggestions, and considerably increased the area under these crops.
3. Committee consider an increase of 100 per cent. possible.

LIMERICK.

No reply.

TIPPERARY, N.R.

No action taken.

TIPPERARY, S.R.

The Committee's answers to the queries are as follows:—

1. By prohibition of slaughter of cows and heifers advanced in calf. It is not considered advisable to interfere with the sale or export of any other class of cattle or of sheep, as it is believed that the owners are the best judges of their own business, and may be relied upon to keep the live stock of the country up to the usual standard.
2. That since the area under corn has increased to a large extent this year, it is believed that there will be a still larger increase next year, if the speculation proves remunerative. The same applies to the growing of potato and fodder crops.

WATERFORD.

1. Regarding diminution of breeding stock, the Committee approve of prohibition of slaughter and of export of all female stock under two years.
2. As to how cultivation of an increased amount of crops can be best encouraged, the Committee recommend a Government guaranteed minimum price of 80/- per barrel of 20 stone for wheat, 15/- per barrel for oats, and 18/- per barrel for barley.
- The Committee express no opinion as regards potatoes and fodder crops, but think corn, potatoes, and fodder might be increased 20 per cent. in the county.

27th July, 1915.

Province of Connaught.

GALWAY.

No reply.*

LEITRIM.

1. By prohibition of slaughter and export of breeding and immature animals. This should apply to the following classes of animals:—In-calf cows and heifers, and sows in young. It is noticeable that, since the passing of the Maintenance of Live Stock Act, 1915, the movement of in-calf cows and heifers out of this county continues as usual. It is believed that Northern dealers keep over such cows until after calving, when they export them and retain the calves. In such cases the calves of our best milk cows are lost to the county. It would be well if the calves could be got back.
2. (a) Erection of suitable corn mills. (1) Suitable corn mills must precede any appreciable increase in the area under cereals. There is not a suitable corn mill in County Leitrim. These mills should be got up by an indi-

vidual or an association subsidised by the Department. (2) Facilities by some system of loans to enable small farmers to obtain the use of farm machinery. The Department's Loan Scheme in the past had worked very successfully in this county. (3) Minimum price for wheat and oats.

- (b) (1) Facilities by some system of loans to enable farmers to obtain the use of up-to-date farm machinery. (2) To insure a sufficient supply of artificial manures for use next season. (3) Lectures and advice to farmers.

(c) The same applies to fodder crops as in the case of potatoes.

3. Through the influence and encouragement of above suggestions, it might be possible to increase the area under tillage from 10 to 15 per cent.

28th September, 1915.

* Several statements from individual members were received.

MAYO.

1. The Committee recommend that from the 1st January, 1916, to the 1st June 1918, and no longer, the exportation of cows and heifers visibly in-calf be not allowed, so that all those animals will calve in Ireland.

That every farmer not valued over £20 should be allowed a bonus, to come from Imperial sources, for every breeding animal kept extra beyond the number kept for the past three years.

2. The Committee recommend that any farmer of not over £20 valuation who sows an extra amount of corn crop in 1916 gets from the Department, at half cost price, from 1 to 2 cwt. of oats, 1 cwt. of wheat, and 1 cwt. of white eye, all fresh imported seed, and the Department to find out through their own instructors the amount actually sown in 1915. The growing of potatoes to be encouraged by the distribution of good fresh seed at a reduced price.

That the efforts made last year by the distribution of leaflets and by lectures on the necessity of growing catch crops be continued on a larger scale this season and begin earlier in the winter, and that the Department send down two special lecturers to County Mayo to deal with this subject.

3. That the Congested Districts Board be asked to give out in one-acre for tillage some of the grazing land they have at present, in suitable districts, as the amount of tillage in the county could be increased by about 29 per cent.

2nd August, 1915.

ROSCOMMON.

No reply.

SLIGO.

Recommendations of Sligo County Committee of Agriculture—

1. (a) Prohibition of export and slaughter of
 - (1) All in-calf heifers.
 - (2) Ewes.

(b) (1) Distribution of popular posters appealing to common sense of people to retain their breeding stock.

(2) Bonus of £1 to each breeding ewe kept.

2. (a) Distribution of leaflets and posters dealing with corn growing, catch-cropping, machinery, etc.

(b) The Department to give advice as to the possibility of attaching mills for grinding wheat into flour to existing power in creameries, and also to give advice to creamery committees as to the purchase of suitable machinery for hiring out to small farmers.

(c) Lectures by agricultural, horticultural and poultry instructors.

(d) Formation of co-operative implement societies.

(e) That the Congested Districts Board and all large land-holders be asked to give out suitable land for common under proper conditions and at a reasonable price.

(f) Division of grazing lands by the Congested Districts Board.

(g) The re-establishment by the Department of their scheme of loans for the purchase of machinery.

(h) That the Department take steps to secure that an adequate supply of reliable seed wheat is available for the needs of the country. In County Sligo last year less wheat was sown than would otherwise have been sown on the scarcity of suitable seed.

(i) The Department to give advice to large farmers as to the use of tractor engines. The merits of these engines to be tested by the Department at once.

(j) That the Department prepare without delay a statement showing the shortages that are threatening both of stock and food stuffs, and supply each County Secretary with the number of copies he requires.

APPENDIX III.

FOOD PRODUCTION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

SOME NOTES ON THE MEASURES ADOPTED BY VARIOUS FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.

AUSTRIA.

Special Committees.—By an Imperial Decree of 9th August, 1914, a special Committee was appointed in every parish charged with the duty of seeing that the necessary work in connection with agricultural production was duly and properly carried out in that parish. The Committee was to draw up a list of farms, etc., where there was a lack of labour and other facilities, and to ascertain the amount of labour available in the parish. All persons, male and female, were obliged, on being so directed by the Committee, to lend a hand at gathering in the harvest or working in the fields.

The Committees are also empowered to order the draught animals or machinery belonging to one farm to be used for carrying out agricultural operations on any other farm when not so employed by their owners.

When the necessary labour is not forthcoming in the parish itself, the Committee may seek for it elsewhere by putting itself in touch with the Committees formed in other parishes.

Cultivation of Waste Lands.—By an Order of 3rd March, 1915, uncultivated lands on which the owners have not carried out the preliminary operations required for the spring tillage before 15th April, 1915, may (provided weather conditions be suitable) be taken into cultivation by the parish for that year. If this is not done by 25th April, permission may be given for the waste land to be tilled by adjoining parishes or by a third party.

Special Leave to Soldiers.—The War Office authorised a fortnight's leave to be granted to agriculturists serving with the colours, to enable them to return home for the spring tillage. Under certain conditions that leave may even be extended.

Farm Homes.—The War Office, at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, have agreed to hand over to farmers homes which have been cast from the army, but are still good for agricultural work, at a price to be fixed by the local Committee.

Farmers desiring to procure such horses must enter their names with agricultural associations or the parish authorities. In no case may they refuse to take the animal which may be allotted to them.

Contracts for Future Harvests.—By a Ministerial Order of 31st March, 1915, all contracts are declared null and void which may have been entered into either for the acquisition of agricultural crops harvested in 1915, or the hope of such a harvest.

This Order does not apply to wine or fruit. Grains (wheat, rye, barley, oats and maize) of the 1915 crop may not be bought or sold before 1st July, 1915. Contracts entered into before that date are of no avail.

Vitigeneous Manures.—An Order of 18th January, 1914, requires firms which produce vitigeneous manures to certify, for urgent agricultural needs, a certain quantity of such manures to destinations which shall be indicated. The same applies to merchants holding stocks of such manures.

Killing of Calves.—An Order of 14th October, 1914, forbids the slaughter of calves under the age of six months.

A subsequent Order, dated 23rd December, prohibits the slaughter, or sale for slaughter, unless with special permission, of calves, heifers and steers before they have reached the age of 24 years, and of bull calves and bulls before the age of two years.

Calves under six months may be killed if the owner, during the past six months, has devoted at least two-thirds of his calves to breeding purposes, and if the calf to be slaughtered has reached complete maturity. In certain other cases where the conditions warrant it, calves under six months old may be killed by special permission.

FRANCE.*

Special Committees.—At the outbreak of war, and thanks to the initiative of M. Méline, a strong Committee of representatives of the chief agricultural associations centred in Paris was formed and worked assiduously to cope with the various problems which arose from day to day: questions of agricultural labour, of transport, of the invasion upon breeding stock due to heavy requisitions, of the working of agricultural credit, the overcropping of live stock in military camps, payment for requisitions, shortage of indispensable draught animals, etc.

This Committee bowed to all agricultural associations a circular calling their attention to the foregoing points and enclosing a questionnaire in which the organisation in question was invited to state the agricultural and economic requirements of its own district.

Maintenance of Live Stock Supplies.—On the outbreak of war, the Government instantly issued a Decree suppressing the import duty on salted meat and frozen meat, while a subsequent Order abolished the duty on imported horses, mules and asses.

The following classes of animals were exempted from all requisition by the military authorities:

1. Cows in-milk or during period of lactation.
2. Brood mares or in-bred mares.
3. Prize stud animals.
4. Animals whose names appear in stud book, or young animals the offspring of the former, though not yet entered in stud book.
5. Heifers. (The central Requisitions Committee have even, at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, refused to fix a price for this class of animal in order to prevent their being bought up by local committees of requisition).
7. Draught oxen.

In order to encourage the importation of meat, the Government subsequently (11th September, 1914), decided to suspend the import duty on live cattle.

The proposal that the Government should itself import frozen meat on a large scale was adopted by the Chamber of Deputies, but rejected by a Committee of the Senate. The latter body, while admitting the necessity for such importation, were against Government intervention in the matter. They, however, invited the Government to present a bill suspending the import duty on frozen meat for a period not to exceed three years after the cessation of the war.

Meanwhile (2nd July) the Deputies accepted a proposal that the Government should immediately import 100,000 head of live cattle from the Argentine or elsewhere.

A Committee has also been appointed for a term of three years to study the whole question of cold storage and the supply of frozen meat.

Agricultural Labour.—(a) At the suggestion of M. Méline's Committee, a control bureau has been established for the purpose of facilitating the supply and distribution of agricultural labour which never very plentiful in France) has become thoroughly disorganised owing to the war. The Bureau receives applications from farmers in need of help, and from labourers in search of work. The question of the employment on agricultural work of refugees and prisoners of war is also being considered.

(b) A special arrangement was made with the military authorities whereby territorialists who were small holders, labourers, farm hands or vine-dressers might be granted a fortnight's leave in order to return home and gather in their crops.

Feeding of Live Stock.—A circular was issued by the Minister of War pointing out that enormous quantities of hay would be required by the army, and Prefects accordingly invited owners of cattle to substitute, as far as possible, other feeding stuffs (roots, etc.) in the daily diet of the animals, so as to leave the maximum quantity of hay available for the use of the army.

ITALY.

Immediately upon the issue of the order for mobilisation, meetings were summoned all over the country by the leading agricultural organisations to discuss the situation and to make suggestions to the Government as to how it might best be dealt with. A large number of schemes were proposed and some have already been acted upon, whilst many are still under consideration.

Loan of Machinery and draught animals.—The principal Government measure issued up to the present is the Decree of 3rd June, 1915, which appears to be somewhat after the Austrian model. It empowers Prefects to require the loan of horses, agricultural machinery and the persons required to work same from proprietors who have such at their disposal for the purpose of reaping and threshing, subject to a fair payment and provided the owner of the said machines and horses shall have the first call upon their services. Moreover, the Decree empowers the requisition of the services of various people for the work of gathering in the harvest on farms where labour is scarce or not available.

Leave granted to Soldiers.—By the Decree of 29th April, 1915, soldiers possessed of special technical qualifications may be granted a month's leave of absence when their presence at their normal place of business is urgently required for economic reasons or for reasons connected with the output of war supplies.

Reduced railway fares for resapers.—The Italian State Railways have declared that parties of resapers, not less than 5 in number, will be carried after 15th June at the rates of the military tariff.

Reduced freight for wheat, etc.—By a Decree dated 24th June, 1915, the railway tariff for whole wagons of wheat and maize and of flour made therefrom is reduced by 50 per cent. on the existing special or exceptional rates. No reduction is made, however, in the case of consignments going abroad or in that of re-forwarded goods. Consignments of maize intended for distilleries or for other industrial purposes do not enjoy this reduction.

Supply of farm horses.—Arrangements have been made whereby horses which have become unfit for army work may be sold to farmers.

* An important publication has been issued by the French Ministry of Agriculture, entitled "L'effort agricole de la France pendant six mois de guerre." Paris, 1915.

Supply of Meat and Live Stock.—A Decree issued on 15th July, 1915, provides machinery for establishing and maintaining the supply of meat to the army during the period of the war. This machinery consists of a Central Council, sitting at the War Office and comprising representatives of the Army, the Ministry of Agriculture, the State Railways, and the agricultural organisations, Committees attached to the various army corps, and, finally, Provincial Committees. These latter are composed of three members: one representing the military, a second the interests of agriculture, and the third those of the Chamber of Commerce. These various bodies co-operate in regulating the work of requisitioning cattle, arranging for their transport and fixing prices for the various Provinces of Italy.

SWITZERLAND.

The serious position in which their country was placed by the outbreak of war and the consequent mobilisation of the Swiss army, was at once realised by the Government, who lost no time in taking all possible steps to alleviate the economic crisis and, if possible, prevent its further aggravation. They have endeavoured to avoid any coercive or compulsory measures and have throughout pursued a policy of persuasion and recommendation such as seems to be most in accordance with Swiss ideas of personal liberty.

Local Agricultural Committees.—In a circular of 8th August, 1914, the Federal Department of Agriculture strongly advised the formation of local agricultural committees whose functions should be as follows:—

- (1) To give free information and advice in regard to agricultural questions of every kind.
- (2) To organise and execute the operations necessary in order to ensure the in-gathering and sale of crops, the cultivation of the land and the care of live stock.
- (3) To announce available supplies of agricultural products such as cereals, potatoes, fruits, etc., and to assist in organising their sale on useful lines.
- (4) To determine which animals are ready and suitable for slaughter, more especially in connection with purchases made for the army.
- (5) To denounce and oppose all illicit operations tending to exploit the present situation.
- (6) To take any other measures calculated to improve economic conditions in the district.

Some of the Cantons made the creation of these local committees compulsory, and a recent circular of the Federal Government (8th June, 1915) states that they have had reason to congratulate themselves upon having done so.

Slaughter of young calves.—At the outbreak of war the only restriction imposed upon the slaughter of young calves was that they should be at least a fortnight old when killed.

In a circular dated 8th August, 1914, the Federal Council prohibited the slaughter of any calf under the age of 6 weeks and requested the Cantonal Governments to take the necessary steps to have this measure put into force.

In a subsequent circular (29th November, 1914) the Council revoked this prohibition, as its object was declared to have been fulfilled, inasmuch as many calves had been saved and the supply of milk (which had been abundant in August) was growing scarce. The Council nevertheless urged farmers to retain as many calves as possible.

Three months later (16th February, 1915) it was again found necessary to increase the stock of calves, and the Federal Government accordingly issued a decree forbidding the slaughter of calves under 5 weeks old. The reasons given for this step were as follows:—

more calves were needed (a) for replenishing the national stock, (b) for supplying the needs of Swiss farmers, and (c) to meet the growing demand in foreign countries for young stock.

A further circular issued on 26th April, 1915, states that the prohibition was being evaded in some cases and calves of only 2 or 3 weeks old were being killed, and urges the Cantonal Governments to enforce the regulation rigidly, inflicting the full penalty (which may be 3 months' imprisonment or 1,000 francs fine) in case of conviction.

Maximum Prices for Seed Grain.—On 4th September, 1914, the Department of Agriculture fixed the following maximum prices for seed grain of first quality and fulfilling all the prescribed conditions both as to purity and germinative power:—

Wheat,	38 francs per 100 kg.
Spelt,	82 " "
Rye,	30 " "
Barley,	29 " "

For smaller quantities a slight increase in price is allowed, but in no case exceeding 1 franc per 100 kg.

Early in January, 1915, the Federal Council declared a Government monopoly of cereals which handed over to the Confederation for the duration of the war the importation of cereals, maize, and all milling products as well as of foreign concentrated feeding stuffs. Owing to the difficulties of transportation a serious disproportion arose between the supply and demand of these articles, and the military authorities were consequently obliged to raise the selling price of wheat to 35 francs per 100 kg., which price was again further raised and now varies from 35 to 40 francs.

Inspection of cereal crops.—In a recent circular, dated 12th June, 1915, the Agricultural Division of the Economic Department (formerly called Department of Agriculture) have organised inspections of the following cereal crops:—

- (a) Wheat—the native selected varieties only.
- (b) Other cereals: spelt, oats and barley, native and foreign selected.
- (c) Rye—native and foreign selected and ordinary varieties which are sufficiently uniform.

The object of the inspections, which are subject to very stringent regulations, is to provide an adequate supply of good home-grown seed grain.

A Committee of Experts has also been formed in order to study the whole question of how the cultivation of cereal crops may best be augmented in Switzerland.

Increasing the supply of pigs.—The shortage of feeding stuffs caused by the almost complete cessation of import trade at the outbreak of war affected the pig-rearing industry to a serious extent, more particularly as the 1914 potato crop was a poor one. The immediate effect was a great reduction in the numbers of pigs in the country. Early in 1915, however, the position became somewhat easier owing to the partial recovery of the import trade. The Government now require millers who contract for the grinding of the Government wheat to produce at least 5 per cent. of "renouveau" or feeding meal, which is to be used exclusively for pig-feeding.

Compulsory labour.—It was at first suggested that the Federal Government should take steps to organise in each commune a compulsory labour service with a view to supplying help where such was needed in factories, workshops or farms, more especially, however, in connection with the gathering in of the harvest. The Council, however, in a circular dated 8th June, 1915, state that they prefer not to make such service compulsory, at least for the present, and rely upon the goodwill and patriotism of the rural population to see that the crops belonging to men who have been called to the colours are not allowed to suffer on account of that circumstance.

APPENDIX IV.

GERMANY'S FOOD SUPPLY IN TIME OF WAR.

The following is a summary of a lecture delivered in Berlin before an assembly of Military Doctors by Professor Ekmeyer, a well-known authority on food problems. The lecture was delivered in answer to propositions contained in the anti-German press in regard to the starving out of Germany during the present war.

The idea of the possibility of starving Germany out of existence, of course, from the fact that she imports many foodstuffs—in particular a great deal of corn from Russia. There are countries which cannot face a blockade in regard to the people's food supply. Most countries depend one upon the other in this connection, and England not the least, for she could not hold out more than a month or two in the event of her isolation. England derives the most of her milk and milk products from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Switzerland, her cheese from Canada, her corn from the whole world, and her meat—at least her frozen meat—from the overseas countries. Many other countries constantly require a big import—Belgium, France, Switzerland and Holland as well as the Scandinavian countries. All these have to get in a big supply of corn if they want to keep their heads above water. There are only two countries which are independent of an outside supply of corn—Russia and Rumania.

The view that Germany is unable to feed herself with her own resources, her own products, is false.

Germany has gradually become an industrial state and thereby has the reason for England's war against Germany. But Germany has not on that account neglected her agriculture. Various measures were passed in favour of the farming class which made a great political stir, but no one—least of all the opponents of that agrarian and tariff policy—imagined that it might become the greatest boon in time of war. The agrarian policy has forced agriculture to demonstrate that it can feed the country with corn and meat. Failing such a demonstration, the tariff legislation would have to be altered.

From this standpoint scientific agriculture has laboured to spread the knowledge of tilings, manures, stock-rearing and so on among ever widening circles. Without doubt this labour has borne fruit and the output of German agriculture has risen enormously in recent times.

The first thing to be done is to ascertain the composition of the various available foodstuffs, and this may be done in a statistical form.

We must in the first place know what is comprised in the food of the whole nation. There are several ways of setting to work. One is to find out what the different classes need and what they consume of the different kinds of food. The examination of an immense mass of material showed the following to be the average national requirement:—80 gr. albumin, 62 gr. fat and 490 gr. carbohydrates=2,302 calories per day and per person, calculated on an average weight of 45 kg. for each individual (i.e., bodily weight). Calculating the actual consumption after subtracting what is lost in kitchen, at table, etc., we get the physiological need which, calculated in the same way, amounts to 85 gr. albumin, 68 gr. fat and 572 gr. carbohydrates=2,437 calories. The difference between these two figures is the average waste which is found to be greater in the case of cheap vegetable foods than in that of animal foods.

In considering the various foodstuffs we are faced with the question—which is the most important for the nation?

Milk or meat. The conclusion, which will certainly surprise most people, is that the output of milk products is more important to our nourishment than the food value of the beast when slaughtered. There is over 85 per cent. more albumin and over 83 per cent. more calories in milk than in meat. Hence every effort must be made to keep milk production up to its highest level, and under no circumstances to allow the stock of cattle to decline. Germany has a stock of 11 million cattle, which produce a good supply of milk, of which only 20 per cent. is drunk, whilst the rest goes to make butter, cream

and cheese. Most of the whey and skim-milk are unfortunately lost as far as human food is concerned, being used for feeding stock. Of the milk value produced about one-third is used for feeding pigs and the production of butcher's meat. One half of the milk is used for butter-making and a little for cheese-making.

Of the cheese, which has not yet become a national food in Germany, only 8 gr. per individual are used, whilst the butter consumption is 18 gr. and the milk consumption 347 gr. Thus a great deal of milk is wasted owing to the fact that we use so many milk products. To make 1 part of butter some 30 parts of milk are required, and we should therefore consider that by our use of butter a great part of our milk goes to loss in so far as feeding the nation goes. On the other hand, people should be encouraged to eat cheese, as the waste in the form of whey is not so great.

Another food which has caused much wailing of brains is our supply of eggs. This is due to the fact that the import of Russian eggs has ceased. But this is not so dangerous, for stoppage of the egg import only means one egg less per head per week.

Meat is regarded by most people as the main thing in diet. Not only in Germany, but throughout the world the food problem is summed up in the question of meat. The rise in meat prices in Germany made people think that the food supply was in a precarious state and that there was a dearth of meat throughout the country. This is an error. The consumption of meat has steadily risen to such an extent that it has been quadrupled in the last 100 years (since 1836). During the last 5 years Germany has been level with England in this respect, or even a little higher if we take into account the great consumption of sausage meat.

The question then arises how would it be and how long would it last if we were obliged to slaughter and eat all our cattle. It has been calculated that our whole supply would last for 1 year and 7½ months. But that would be a great calamity, as we should have to destroy our stock of cattle, which after all supply us with a great quantity of other food units and important foodstuffs.

In the meantime meat is not only consumed, but produced. Thus in the year 1912-13 two or three millions more swine were reared than were actually consumed. If we have to maintain our live stock at all costs, the question whether we have enough food for them is of the utmost importance.

In connection with the live stock problem we must first of all be quite clear on this point that Russia supplied enormous quantities of barley, over 5 million tons annually. In addition we had various concentrated feeding stuffs from other countries. This was naturally of great importance to our stock-rearing and milk production. A part of our live stock has therefore to be sacrificed, and it ought to be the swine. From other lands we obtained much that was cheap and that facilitated labour, but which now to a large extent can be replaced by our national foodstuffs. The present situation is in so far good that this year's (1914) harvest of animal feeding stuffs was extraordinarily plentiful.

In this connection the experts' opinion as to the effect of the different measures proposed for maintaining our live stock is of great interest. Opinions are widely different according as people have been in the habit of using concentrated foods or have made home-produced stuffs the basis of the diet. Some people think that we should temporarily reduce our stock of swine, others that we should retain our present stock of animals but without adding to them.

It is best to attach oneself to the less optimistic party and assume that a reduction in meat production is unavoidable. This on the assumption that the consumption of meat will remain as it was, that there is a sufficiency of feeding stuffs, and that the improvement in the national production of fodder crops will not realise all our hopes.

There will be a great shortage of fish meat, but poultry and other bird meat will not be much affected.

Taking things on the whole, there will be some reduction in meat supplies, but there will not be any famine in animal albumin, as milk can be used to a greater extent than hitherto in feeding the population.

The supply of fat is somewhat smaller, but we need not fear that there will be too little fat. We must, however, be careful to reduce the consumption, which in recent times has been far from economical, of butter and of other kinds of fat. Butter makes up about seven-tenths of all the fat used.

One thing which is of paramount importance is the daily bread. Of the total quantity of food required to sustain life, about one-third belongs to the animal and two-thirds to the vegetable kingdom. A country which, in addition to agriculture, also carries on stock-breeding, is in a better position than a country which only produces vegetable crops, because cattle consume products which we human beings cannot eat and transform them into meat.

The production of corn is not so great this year in Germany as it was last year.

The import of bread cereals from Russia amounted to over 2 millions tons of wheat. In return for this we exported whole rye and rye flour. This of course has now ceased, but even so, it does not cover the deficit caused by dropping the wheat import. Nevertheless the state of affairs is not so bad even then. We annually produce 10 million tons of rye and 4 million tons of wheat, i.e., 210 kg. of bread corn per person per annum. During the years 1900-1911 we had for feeding animals as well as for our own needs 1462 kg. rye and 80.8 kg. wheat—221 kg. corn. Of this, 25 per cent. of rye went to feeding stock and there thus remained 165.1 kg. rye and 80.8 kg. wheat, or altogether 245.9 kg. of bread corn for our use. The actual consumption of bread and flour is estimated at 275.7 kg. The figures agree quite well, and as the German harvest as above mentioned gave a yield of 210 kg. rye and wheat there should be enough for bread purposes if the amount given to live stock is restricted.

The amount of barley required for human food is small and is easily met. It is assumed, of course, that the production of beer will be reduced by at least 15 per cent., so this should leave some barley available.

Leguminous crops are small in Germany and the bulk of what is consumed is imported.

Potatoes are the last of the important foodstuffs. The potato crop was not over large in weight or mass, but extraordinarily rich in starch, so many more food units must have been produced in the present year than when there was a more abundant crop with a smaller starch content.

The potato is not only important for human food, but also for live stock feeding and industrial purposes. One-half of our output of potatoes goes to feed stock, one-fourth is used for human food and one-fourth for seed and industrial purposes. Of potatoes therefore we have enough, particularly as the seed manufacture has been reduced to six-tenths of its former production.

Counting everything together we arrive at the result that there is no danger of our not holding out till the harvest, but we must walk warily and set our faces against luxury.

First and foremost we must think about bread. Hitherto we have been accustomed to use only the whitest part of the wheaten meal to feed the nation. A change must be made here and white bread must be replaced by black bread. If the rye grain is milled as fine as the wheat grain there is no difference from a physiological point of view.

The consumption of butterfat and cream is so extraordinarily great that it must be possible to reduce it. It is a very good thing to eat one's bread without a thick layer of butter and to have milk in one's coffee as in the olden days instead of cream. A great deal of precious foods are lost whilst the demand is for an ever increasing milk production.

What small savings can amount up to will be seen from the following example. The German nation consumes daily 25,000 million portions of food. If each portion contained only 1 g. less of fat, that would be 25 million kg., and as 30 times the quantity of milk is used to make that quantity of butter, this would mean, in other words, that 750 million litres of milk daily would be saved by that one gram of fat! If we reckon that a cow gives annually 2,000 litres milk, we see that it takes 300,000 cows a whole year to produce the milk required to meet that tiny little extra consumption. Similarly with the use of cream. The use of milk is therefore to be preferred, especially as by that means we also secure the albumin and sugar in the milk.

The excessive use of meat is due to various circumstances. 30 per cent. of the meat eaten is pork, and this to a great extent is eaten in the form of sausages. It is admirable that this English meat diet should be given up, as it is only an aping of foreign customs.

In household various savings can be effected by buying more cheaply, by economical cooking, and by carefulness of meals. In well-to-do families a wastage of from 15 to 20 per cent. is not uncommon.

An increased use of vegetables is good for many people. It can be managed by having more nutritious soups and by the more extensive use of farm-house diet.

This is what the individual can do, but the public can also do something. It is hard to make an impression on the masses by means of instruction. People listen to our warnings but they do not act accordingly. The pessimists complain that everything is so dark, but they act exactly as they used to do and the optimists also live in their usual fashion but without any scruples at all.

Government Measures.—The Government have forbidden the export of foodstuffs and have facilitated their import. Further, measures have been adopted with regard to agriculture and motor ploughing, advice has been given with regard to manure, credit has been allowed for the tillage of uncultivated ground, steps have been taken to assist potato drying, etc., etc.

It has been rightly pointed out in the press that the price of foodstuffs should be regularly fixed. But this, like other measures, has been delayed. The prohibition to use corn for cattle feeding came too late, with the result that much rye and other kinds of grain were used for that purpose. The Federal Council in Switzerland was quicker and had already made a law on 27th August to the effect that bread corn should not be used for feeding live stock. In Germany that rule was not made until 29th October.

More rye and less wheat must be used, not only during the war, but also in the future. But this will not be effected without compulsion. If we compare this year's harvest with the production and importation in 1900-1902-1911, we see that there is 8.9 per cent. more rye and 21.5 per cent. less wheat. The deficit of 21.5 per cent. can be covered by mixing rye with wheat, by making more flour of the wheat, or by both making more flour and adding rye to it. The third proposal is the one that has been adopted: wheat is being ground finer and mixed with 10 per cent. of rye flour.

To the rye flour dried potatoes may be added. The potato is a food which is easily spoiled because it is difficult to store and from 10 to 20 per cent. of the starch is lost by transpiration. But if potatoes are dried early in autumn the loss is small and they will keep indefinitely. The technique of potato drying has advanced a long way but is not yet quite perfect.

The bakers have received permission to add up to 20 per cent. of potato flour to rye flour, but all bread made of this flour must be stamped with a K.

Up till now only the price of corn has been fixed by law, but it is possible that the prices of other foods may also be fixed, more particularly that of potatoes. It is quite true that potatoes are a cheap food for the people. Therefore potato bread is not altogether on the track. But a better plan, instead of having potato bread, is to buy four-fifths pure rye bread and one-fifth potatoes. That would be cheaper than to let the baker mix it.

There will probably be a regulation of milk prices and of the relation between the price of freshly strained and skimmed milk.

The state of affairs in other countries is no better. In Switzerland, for example, only one quality of flour has been made since 20th August, and it must contain a couple per cent. of bran.

It is a remarkable thing that there is as yet no organisation of our food supply which would hold all the threads in its hand. A country like Germany, which takes a foremost place in the matter of food supply and the science of nutrition, ought to have a central food organisation, a place where every kind of information connected with the food of the nation would be collected—the science of production and supply of foodstuffs, import, etc, etc.

We should then never run the risk of being surprised. But as this is still all in the future we must for the moment content ourselves with improvisations. It is, however, not yet too late, for the food question will last long after the war is over.

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TO

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DUBLIN CASTLE.

4th January, 1916.

SIR,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant forwarding, for submission to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, the Minutes of Oral Evidence and of the Deliberative Conferences, with Appendices thereto, of the Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

I am,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

MATTHEW NATHAN

The Secretary,

Department of Agriculture and

Technical Instruction,

Dublin.

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